

Max Kaufmann

Churbn Lettland

The Destruction of the Jews of Latvia

Foreword by George Schwab

Preface by Paul A. Shapiro

Introduced by Gertrude Schneider

Translated from the German by Laimdota Mazzarins

Edited by Gertrude Schneider and Erhard Roy Wiehn

Hartung-Gorre Publishers, Konstanz, Germany

Cover front page: Holocaust Memorial in the old Jewish cemetery of Riga. Photo E. Roy Wiehn. Back cover: Max Kaufmann; printed by Sowa, Warsaw, Poland.

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutschen Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in The Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>

Copyright © Jewish Survivors of Latvia, Inc., New York

First edition 2010

HARTUNG-GORRE VERLAG, KONSTANZ, GERMANY

<http://www.hartung-gorre.de>

ISBN 978-3-86628-315-2

Contents

George Schwab: Foreword	7
Paul A. Shapiro: Preface to the First English Edition (2010)	9
Gertrude Schneider: Introduction	13
Erhard Roy Wiehn: Comment.....	18

Max Kaufmann: Churbn Lettland – Destruction of the Jews of Latvia ... 19

Yiskor - Commemoration	23
Jeannot Lewenson: Foreword (German Edition 1947)	25
Nochum Senitzki: Foreword (German Edition 1947).....	26
Max Kaufmann: Preface	27

Part I

The History of the Jewish Kibbutz (Community) in Latvia	29
War 1941–1945: The Germans March into Riga.....	34
The Beginning of the Destruction of the Jews of Riga (1 July – 25 Oct. 1941)...	36
The Large Riga Ghetto (25 October – 30 November 1941)	50
The Liquidation of the Large Riga Ghetto (30 November – 9 December 1941)	58
The Small Riga Ghetto (Kasernierungslager – Satellite Camp) and the Reichs- Juden-Ghetto (Reich Jewish Ghetto) (1 December 1941 – 2 November 1943)	71
Plan of the Riga Ghetto.....	126

Part II

The "Zentralna" and "Terminka" Prisons of Riga	128
The Press in Riga During the German Occupation	131
Jumpravmuiža (Jungfernhof)	132
Kworim weinen (Graves Weep).....	135
Art in the Riga Ghettos and Concentration Camps.....	137
Men in Women's Roles (in the Small Riga Ghetto).....	140
Bloody Sloka (Schlock) – To My Only Son Arthur, Who Was Killed.....	143
Professor Simon Dubnow and His Final Journey	147
Latgale (Lettgallen):	
a) The Jewish City of Dvinsk (Daugavpils) and Its Destruction	150
b) Rositten and Its Surroundings (Zilupe, Ludza, Krāslava, Preiļi etc.)..	158
Zemgale, Kurzeme and Vidzeme:	
a) Libau (Liepāja)	162
b) Mitau (Jelgava)	164
c) Tukums, Auce (Autz), Ventspils (Windau), Sabile (Zabeln) etc.	164

[Eds. Photos of Mass Killing of Libau (Liepaja) Jews December 1941]	166
[Eds. Photos of Prominent Latvian Jews Murdered]	167

Part III

The "Kaiserwald" Concentration Camp Riga	168
Kasernierungen – Small Satellite Camps	194
a) "Gestapo", Later the "Lenta" Satellite Camp	195
b) HKP (Heereskraftfahrpark – Army Vehicle Park)	198
c) Park (HKP)	203
d) Quartieramt (Billeting Department)	210
e) Spilve	211
f) ABA (Armeebekleidungsamt – Army Clothing Department)	214
g) AEG (Allg. Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft – General Electric Works)	215
h) Strasdenhof (Strazdumuiža)	217
i) Reichskommissariat (Reich Commissary)	219
j) Reichsbahn (Reich Railroad)	220
k) Balastdamm (Balasta Dam)	221
l) Dünawerke (Daugava Works)	222
m) The Dundaga (Dundangen) Satellite Camp	223
n) Poperwaln (Popevalns)	224
o) Other Satellite Camps (Kasernierungen)	225
The Evacuation	226

Part IV

The "Stutthof" Concentration Camp (Waldheim)	229
The "Buchenwald" Concentration Camp (Satellite Camp Magdeburg)	241
The "Sachsenhausen" Concentration Camp (Oranienburg)	257
The Road to Freedom (The Liberation)	260
Via Stutthof – Burggraben – Gotentov – Riben – Lauenburg to Freedom ...	265
From Riga via the KZ Stutthof – Buchenwald – Zeitz-Remersdorf to There- sienstadt and Freedom	267
The Dachau Concentration Camp	270
The Day of Commemoration (Jorzeit) in the Riga Synagogue	270
Epilogue	273
Index of Names	278

George Schwab*

Foreword

Max Kaufmann's *Churbn Lettland: The Destruction of the Jews of Latvia*, is a classic. Published in Munich, Germany, in 1947, only two years after Nazi Germany's collapse, the book contains Kaufmann's recollections and those of other Latvian Jewish survivors whom he was able to buttonhole in the tumultuous immediate postwar period. In Yiddish, Russian, German, and Latvian he grilled them in Riga, Berlin, and Munich on their wartime reminiscences. With little more than pen, pencil, and slips of paper, Kaufmann made copious notes and painstakingly reconstructed what had transpired between 1941 and 1945. What makes this work unique is Kaufmann's account to record for posterity the deliberate destruction of the once culturally rich Latvian Jewish community.

Why publish this oeuvre in English now? Notwithstanding the fact that Holocaust studies have been and still are widely pursued, serious gaps in the analysis of the enormity of this heinous crime perpetrated by Germans and their local collaborators still remain. The case of Latvia, where more than 80,000 Latvian Jews and thousands non-Latvian Jews were slaughtered, is but one example. Though it is true that a few eyewitness accounts and some scholarly works by Latvian and non-Latvian scholars have appeared since 1947, especially in the recent past, much still needs to be researched in general and also in the wake of the huge, recently released trove of declassified documents stored in Bad Arolsen, Germany. Another reason why this work should be known today is the need to counter the works of charlatan writers who, out of ignorance or prejudice or malice, deny that the Holocaust in Latvia and elsewhere ever took place and dismiss eyewitness accounts and documentary evidence as inventions by Jews and their sympathizers.

The late Boris Kliot, a survivor and resident of New York City, understood the relevance of Kaufmann's book and commissioned its translation into English. Professor Gertrude Schneider of the City University of New York corrected factual errors and mistranslations of technical terms, especially those referring to ghetto and concentration camp language. Wherever possible, the Riga archivist Rita Bogdanova corrected the spelling of names to accord with those found in the Riga archive and transliterated many Latvian spelled names

* Dr. George Schwab, Professor Emeritus, City University of New York (City College and Graduate Center), President, National Committee on American Foreign Policy.

to match the German spelling. Dr. Ivar Brod of New York carefully scrutinized and harmonized the various parts of the emendated translation, notes, introduction, foreword and preface before he forged them into this authoritative and unforgettable book.

March 2010

Paul A. Shapiro*

Preface to the First English Edition (2010)

"For us, all of Latvia is a huge cemetery – a cemetery without graves or gravestones."

Max Kaufmann, *Churbn Lettland* (1947)

The Holocaust revealed in an unprecedented way the worst that human beings are capable of – unjustifiable hatred, demonization and isolation of one-time neighbors, colleagues, friends, even innocent children, because they were labeled "different"; shameful greed matched by comprehensive theft by both rich and poor from both rich and poor; deportation to faraway camps or to locations just out of sight or earshot; and finally, mass murder. More extreme than any genocide that preceded it or that has followed, the Holocaust was uncivilized, comprehensive in intent, brutally vicious in implementation--and nowhere more so than in Latvia.

In the mid-1930s, the Latvian Jewish community numbered some 94,000 people, or roughly five percent of this small country's population. Nearly half of the Jews lived in the capital, Riga, where their contributions to the economic, cultural, and civic life of the country were palpable. And yet, of the approximately 75,000 Jews who remained in the country when Germany invaded in June 1941, 70,000 fell victim in just six months, first to massive killings in rural areas and selective killings of male Jews in urban areas, and then, on November 29-30 and December 8-9, 1941, to the execution of more than 26,000 Jews from the Riga ghetto in Rumbula forest just outside the city. Latvia was also the final destination of more than 20,000 German and Austrian Jews and Jews from other occupied countries, deported eastward to their deaths by Nazi authorities. By early 1943, only about 5,000 Jews remained in Latvia, concentrated in the Riga, Dvinsk, and Liepaja ghettos and a few slave labor camps. By war's end the number of Jews in Latvia itself had been reduced even further, by displacement to labor camps inside Germany and by death, to just a few hundred. By all accounts, fewer than 1,500 Latvian Jews survived the Holocaust.

In Latvia to a greater extent than in any other country occupied by the Germans, local volunteers and police units -- most notoriously the Arajs Kommando -- participated actively and enthusiastically in murdering the country's

* Director Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Jews. (The extent of Latvian collaboration was matched, if anywhere, only in neighboring Lithuania.) SS and Police units composed of Latvian volunteers also served outside the confines of the country's boundaries, which was not the norm in most of Nazi-dominated Europe, participating with equal enthusiasm in the murder of Jews in the various locations to which these Latvian national units were sent. Latvian recruits also worked as guards at ghettos and camps established by German authorities to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

Latvia, of course, was not an independent state during the Holocaust, so there can be no question of official complicity by state authorities. But as Latvia progresses today toward full embrace of the principles that underpin democratic societies and full integration of the country into the European community, it is essential that the free citizens of democratic Latvia grapple honestly with the factors that resulted nearly seven decades ago in collaboration and complicity in mass murder by a significant numbers of Latvians.

What Latvians characterize as the "multiple occupations" of Latvia -- by the USSR in 1940, by German forces in 1941, and again by the USSR in 1944 -- followed by nearly five decades as a Soviet republic, obscured much of the history of the Holocaust and made coming to terms with the realities of the Holocaust in Latvia virtually impossible. Following the reestablishment of Latvian independence, the government appointed an International Commission of Historians in 1998 to examine "crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Latvia from 1940 to 1956 during the occupations of the Soviet Union and National Socialist Germany." Unfortunately, the promising beginnings that were made to clarify and assume responsibility for this history soon lost their momentum and have been confronted by increasing trends among scholars, in Latvian civil society, and by political figures to obfuscate key elements of the history.* Historical facts regarding the Holocaust remain contested in Latvia and are all too often distorted for political gain. Acceptance of responsibility for intense collaboration by some Latvians has not been achieved. Accusations that the Jews bore responsibility for the excesses of Soviet rule remain common. And there has been little evident progress in ensuring the training of a future generation of scholars and educators able to research and teach

* On the positive early efforts of Latvia's Historical Commission, see "Latvia's Historical Commission" on the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia; and the 2001 report on "The activities of the Second Sub-Commission: Holocaust in the Territory of Latvia during Nazi Occupation 1941-1945" by Professor Aivars Stranga, chair of the sub-commission. Other items on the same web site, however, reflect in varying degrees recent trends to equate Latvian experience under Nazi and Soviet rule. The writings of Professor Stranga remain in marked contrast to this trend.

about the Holocaust in Latvia after survivors and eyewitnesses are no longer able to do so.

Fortunately, outside Latvia, a number of serious scholarly studies have appeared in recent years.* The new availability of a large volume of archival material that had been inaccessible prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union offered - and continues to offer - unique opportunities for scholars to undertake such research.

Still, there is something missing in much of the recent work on the Holocaust in Latvia, and that is the voice of the survivors. Though they were few in number, and fewer still today, nearly 70 years after the catastrophe, the survivors of the Holocaust in Latvia offer a perspective that is unique, powerful, weighty with compassion for the victims, and authoritative by virtue of their having been there. Surely, as Max Kaufmann acknowledges in his final pages, there were things he could not know or might have forgotten before he sat down to write *Churbn Lettland*. But he was there, and his "whole downcast heart" is contained in the book.

In 1947 Kaufmann succeeded in capturing the day by day agony of the Jews of Latvia between 1941 and 1945. His book communicates through lived experience the depth of their suffering and despair; life and death as they really were during that time; and the extraordinary sequence of events and choices that could result, at the end of those years, in survival - his own survival, submerged in the immense losses of community, family and home that he had endured. In telling the story of the destruction of the Jews of Latvia, Kaufmann recalls the names of people lost, the locations where they lived and died, the camps to which the remnants of the community were sent after the orgy of killing of the first year of the war, and the routes along which they were taken, first to concentration and labor camps in Germany, and then elsewhere, at war's end, to try to reestablish some semblance of normality in their lives. Kaufmann "shared," as he put it, "step by step, the martyrdom of his countrymen and coreligionists."

As we approach an era when survivors will no longer be with us to recall with love the innocents lost and to inspire us and our children and our children's children to remember and to learn from the unprecedented tragedy of the Holocaust, making Max Kaufmann's early chronicle available in an Eng-

* Recent examples, both published originally in German, include: Andrej Angrick and Peter Klein, *The Final Solution in Riga: Exploitation and Annihilation, 1941-1944* (Berghahn Books, 2009); and Bernhard Press, *Murder of the Jews in Latvia, 1941-1945* (Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 2000).

lish-language version takes on an importance that we failed to recognize in earlier years. It is indicative of the crucial role that Holocaust survivors have played that it is Kaufmann's fellow survivors – George Schwab, Gertrude Schneider, and the members of the Association of Jewish Survivors of Latvia - who are most responsible for the appearance of this work nearly seven decades after the Holocaust in Latvia began.

March 1, 2010

Gertrude Schneider*

Introduction

Max Kaufmann was a complicated, enigmatic man. He could be charming and gracious one minute, and absolutely tactless and insulting the next one. There was a self-righteousness about him that some people found disturbing, but it befitted him, for in his way and to his way of thinking, he had always done the proper thing before, during, and after the war.

That war, the most catastrophic event in the life of European Jewry, had robbed him of his beloved wife Franka and his only child, a son, who was the apple of his eye and of whom he was justly proud. As he once told me, these two people were his *raison d'être* and losing them in such a brutal manner, described in this book, changed his formerly gentle nature to one of bitterness. For the rest of his life he lived for one thing only and that was to take revenge.

I had met his son Arthur in Riga's German ghetto, during an Oneg Shabbat. Many teenagers from both the German and the Latvian ghettos, divided though they were by barbed wire, attended these Friday evenings, watched over by the trustworthy Latvian Jewish police. Arthur did not come very often. He told one of the German Jews, a boy his age, that his father was not happy when he went to the German ghetto, since he thought, as did many of the other Latvian Jews, that their families had been murdered so as to make space for the German, Austrian and Czech Jews, who arrived shortly after the bloody massacres endured by their Latvian brethren.

As did most other people in the ghettos, father and son went to work each day, but were in different *Kommandos*. Kaufmann was *Kolonnenfuehrer* of his work detail. He was liked and respected by both Latvian and German Jews, and he did his utmost to lighten their burdens; at one time, when *Kommandant* Roschmann wanted to send one of the workers to the Central Jail for some insignificant misdemeanor, Kaufmann managed to persuade him to let the man continue with his "important" work for the war effort. The *Kommandant* relented.

During the spring of 1943, as the two ghettos were slowly emptied, the Kaufmanns were sent to the peatbogs of Sloka, and the elder Kaufmann had a premonition of disaster. In later years, he often mentioned it. Yet, although the work was hard, father and son were together and that was all that mattered.

* Dr. Gertrude Schneider, Graduate School of C.U.N.Y., President, Ph.D. Alumni Association; author of 8 books, 6 in English, 2 in German.

On the 20th of May, Kaufmann senior stayed in the barracks, because he had a nasty cut on his hand. Arthur and most of the other men went out to cut the peatmoss. As fate would have it, he and two friends of his had been able to get some food from a peasant, and put it in their bags inside a small shed. A short time later, *Kommandant* Roschmann and two other SS men, Migge and Maywald, came to Sloka to see that all was going on as planned. Unfortunately for the teenagers, they found the bags in the shed. Without much further ado, as the brothers Mordchelewitz tried to run away while Arthur just remained next to the murderers' vehicle, the brothers were shot in the back and Arthur in the neck. It was Roschmann who shot Kaufmann's only son.

For several weeks after the personal catastrophe, Kaufmann did not speak, according to people close to him. On the day when the *Kommando* left Sloka for the Riga concentration camp *Kaiserwald*, after staying a few days in the almost empty ghetto, the bereaved father raised his hands to the heavens and swore that he would avenge his son's death.

He endured Kaiserwald, worked at several *Kommandos* in and around the city of Riga, was transferred to the extermination camp Stutthof near Danzig (Gdansk), and from there to a factory in Magdeburg, Germany. He was liberated in May of 1945, in rather poor physical condition, but as soon as he had recovered, he started on the book, *Churbn Lettland*. The final title, since it was written in German, was *Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands*. It was published in Munich, Germany, in 1947, and paid for by a group of Latvian Jews who had temporarily settled in that city and surroundings.

As Kaufmann started on his quest, he heard that a trial concerning the *Hoeherer SS and Polizei Fuehrer* Friedrich Jeckeln, was just starting in Riga. Jeckeln was being prosecuted before a Soviet tribunal. Kaufmann decided on the spur of the moment to go to Riga, and despite many dangers and obstacles, thanks to his resourcefulness and knowledge of useful languages, he managed to do so. He had hoped to find Arthur's grave, but he never did. He was, however, able to attend the trial of the monster responsible for much of the implementation of the Final Solution. Kaufmann listened to Jeckeln's testimony and found out that the latter had been sent to Latvia, because both he and the authorities in Berlin believed that Latvia and its citizens were especially efficient in aiding the Germans in the destruction of their fellow Jewish citizens as well as for thousands of foreign Jews sent to that inhospitable country for liquidation. Himmler was not disappointed by his choice. Kaufmann had known all along about the perfidy of his countrymen, but he was not aware of how deep their hatred was and how well his former neighbors under-

stood what they had to do. He also did not know that they were Latvia's famous and most efficient export to other ghettos and camps in the Europe.

Jeckeln was given the well deserved death sentence, and he showed no remorse at all.

During the trial, Kaufmann met one of the survivors of the German ghetto in Riga, and it turned out that he knew him. The young man had been part of the Vienna group. His name was Erich Pinkassowitsch, son of Jakob Pinkassowitsch, former attaché of the Soviet Union, who lived with his wife, son, and daughter in Vienna; all four were taken into custody shortly after June 22, 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The whole family was added to the Riga transport of January 11, 1942, and soon made friends with several of the Latvian Jews. In fact, for a while, the older Pinkassowitsch worked in Kaufmann's *Kommando*. Kaufmann was stunned to see Erich and asked him what he was doing in Riga. The story was typical of the chaotic time in which we lived. Erich had been with the father, and Dolly, his sister, had been with her mother, once they had left *Kaiserwald* for Stutthof. They were sent to satellite labor camps of Stutthof. Both parents died during their deathmarch, and the daughter had crawled to the edge of a road, where the Russians found her, took her to a field hospital and brought her to Riga, since she told them that she came from there. Two of her toes were amputated, but she soon recovered and convinced one of the Jewish nurses to try to find her brother who was somewhere near Gdansk. Through the grapevine, Erich, who had made his way to Vienna after his liberation, heard that his sister was in a hospital in Riga, and, just like Kaufmann, made his way there. Latvian Jews helped him to find her, but while it was not all that hard to go there, it was almost impossible to leave. Kaufmann, too, wanted to leave; he still had connections and the three of them, he, Erich, and Dolly, were able to make their way to the West. Kaufmann went to Berlin and Munich, and the siblings came back to Vienna.

Only three years later, they met at one of the gatherings organized by Kaufmann in New York and I was there too, with my mother and sister as well as other Viennese survivors of our ghetto.

Kaufmann attended their weddings and was always ready to help when needed. When he gave me his book, I looked for some sign of the family Pinkassowitsch and when I could not find it, I called Kaufmann and asked him why he had not mentioned them or their parents in his opus. He told me sternly, that he had written and dedicated his book to the trials and tribulations of Latvian Jews, and not about Jews from other countries. Although he had men-

tioned some of the transports that brought them, he felt that they had come to replace his own people, who had been killed to make room for them. Thus, they could not be considered to be included in his lament for Latvian Jewry. I could not believe that such a gifted man remained so obstinate to the truth: All of us were to be killed!

In Munich, Kaufmann finished the book. He used his own system of research, by interviewing his fellow Jewish Latvians. One of them, Professor George Schwab, a teenager at the time, still laughs about the way Kaufmann would buttonhole him and his mother in Berlin and ask them questions about Libau (Liepāja). The youngster eventually became a historian, but used conventional methods of doing research.

Even if Kaufmann's methods were unorthodox, he managed to flesh out the tragic events in a way that is still considered a *tour de force*. From reading his opus, it becomes clear that this is not written by a man of letters, but by a man suffering enormous heartache, with a need to write so that others, after his passing, would know what he had done. Painstakingly, he enumerates horrific crimes, very often complete with names, and describing the inhumane treatment suffered by him and other Latvian Jews. To quote "The Song of the Partisans," brought to *Kaiserwald* by the remnant of the Wilnaer Ghetto, the book is written not with a pencil, nor with a pen, but in blood.

As mentioned earlier, Latvian Jews in Munich saw to it that it was published, and Kaufmann could now return to his original quest to seek revenge. He became a Nazi Hunter, looking for perpetrators in general and for his son's murderers in particular. He managed to visit Max Gymnich in his cell, after the former chauffeur of Krause and Roschmann was apprehended, and even spoke to him. Whatever he said, worked very well. Gymnich committed suicide a short time later.

Kurt Migge, at one time deputy commander of the ghetto, was caught and brought to trial for his crimes as *Kommandant* of Salaspils during 1942. He got away with a few years of jail. That left Eduard Roschmann, the *Kommandant* of the ghetto and overseer of *Stuetzpunkt*. With the help of Bishop Alois Hudal, a functionary at the Vatican and fellow Austrian, he escaped to South America.

In 1948, Kaufmann came to New York, got married, found work, and devoted the rest of his life to keep the Latvian Jews living in America aware of what had happened during these hard years, for he knew well that everyone knew only the fragment that he or she endured. That is why he had asked all those questions... to combine the destruction and the life lived during it.

He saw to it that they met each year to mourn together, always in the month when the two large operations had taken place, in November and/or December 1941. Several of the German Jews came to mourn together with their Latvian counterparts, but he remained cool and reserved.

At times I thought we were closer just because I was a child in the ghetto, but I had a rude awakening one day, when I asked him to let me have names of his friends still in Riga, so that I could meet with them when I would soon be there. He wanted to know my purpose for going to "his" city and I told him that I would be doing research for the purpose of my doctoral dissertation, that had been approved by my University's History Department. He asked "Isn't my book enough? It could always be translated!" I said that while I considered his book an important source, I was to write a documented study about the thousands of deportees who had been sent there, and of whom very few came back. He looked at me coldly and said "They are not important."

I did not speak to him for several years and avoided the commemoration, but when my first book *Journey Into Terror: Story of the Riga Ghetto* was published, he came to The City College of New York, where I was teaching, and sincerely apologized.

Much later my publisher told me that Kaufmann had bought 100 copies of my book and given instruction to send them to all his friends, all over the world. From then on, I was a speaker at every annual commemoration, and when a few of us, with his blessings, founded the Jewish Survivors of Latvia, Inc., I became a Vice President and Editor of *the Latvian Jewish Courier*.

In 1985 I announced that I was ready for a sequel to *Journey Into Terror*, and asked for our members to come forward with especially interesting events they remembered from the war years. Kaufmann came to me and asked that I translate the chapter "Bloody Sloka" from his book, where he wrote of Arthur's murder. I did so, but he died only a few weeks before my second book, *Muted Voices: Jewish Survivors of Latvia Remember* was introduced to the public at the Graduate School of City University of New York in October 1987. In his honor, I gave the copyright of my book to the Jewish Survivors of Latvia, Inc., so that the earnings could be used for the members.

I just think how happy he would be at this time, if he knew that his complete book will be published. The late Boris Kliot paid for the translation, but he neglected to teach the translator the various words we used in the ghettos and in the camps, a jargon that does not lend itself to the usual translation. He meant well, but it took me a very long time to bring order into chaos. Furthermore, when Kaufmann wrote the book in the two years following the war,

many of the facts were not yet known, and the people asked by him, could not answer many of his questions. Now, however, much more is known and I have carefully added it. I also added missing names to the index and with great hopes for a timely publication, I turn the manuscript over to my friend and colleague, Dr. George Schwab from Libau, Latvia. It is he who will see to it that Max Kaufmann's greatest wish will be fulfilled. My work is done.

Summer 2009

Erhard Roy Wiehn*

Comment

When I visited Lithuania in the late summer of 1991, I wanted to take a closer look at the Shoáh of the Baltic States. This visit eventually led to the reissuance and translation of an unforgettable book.

While visiting Riga, Latvia, in June 1998, including the "Documentation Center of Jews in Latvia", organized by Margers Vestermanis, I discovered Max Kaufmann's (1896-1987) *Churbn Lettland – Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands*, a book published by the author in Munich in 1947. More than fifty years later the book that I was examining had been out of print for decades.

Dipping into the book convinced me of the special value of its documentation, and, therefore, I decided to publish it as a reprint in my own series, Edition Shoáh & Judaica/Jewish Studies. In that way Max Kaufman's work appeared for the second time in April 1999 – reprinted by Hartung-Gorre Publishers, Konstanz, Germany.

I am very glad and grateful, that almost eleven years after its reissuance, an English translation of Kaufmann's work will be available. I hope it will serve the author's purpose, as stated in the preface, of standing "a lasting memorial to all those who have perished" and of providing "material for the future historians who will one day describe the tremendous destruction of our Jewish people."

March 2010

* Professor Emeritus in the Department of History and Sociology, University of Konstanz, Germany.

Max Kaufmann

Churbn Lettland

The Destruction of the Jews of Latvia



Holocaust Memorial in the old Jewish cemetery of Riga. (Photo Erhard Roy Wiehn)

**This book is dedicated
to my dearly beloved wife Franka and my son Arthur,
as well as all my relatives who were murdered.
Max Kaufmann**



W. Kaufman

Yizkor (Commemoration)

The communities of our innocent brothers and sisters, parents and children, who perished in the chambers of hell and the crematoria of the damned Moloch-Hitler or died in other ways will remain in Israel's memory forever.

These rivers of spilled blood will seethe and flood the world with the eternal sign of Cain until the evil that produced such destruction has been rooted out.

May these few words be the flowers on their graves!

Honor to their memory!

The author.

זכור!...

ס'וועלן אייביק בלייבן אין ישראל'ס
זכרון די עדות פון אונדזערע אומ-
שולדיקע ברידער און שוועסטער, עלמערן
אין קינדער וואס זיינען אומגעקומען
אין די גיהנום-קאמערן פון פארשאל-
טענעם הימלער-מולד'ס קרעמאטאריעס
און אלערליי מיתה משונה'ס

זאלן די פארגאסענע טייכן בלום
זידן און פארשווענקען מיט אן אייביקן
קיין-צייכן די וועלט - ביז ס'וועט ניט
אויסגעקערט ווערן פון איר די רשעות,
וואס האט געבראכט צו אועלכע חור-
בנות.

די פאר ווערמער זאלן זיין זיי
בלומען אויף זייערע קברים.

כבוד זייער אנדענקה!

דער פארפאסער

Jeannot Lewenson*

Foreword (German Edition 1947)

The Association of Liberated Latvian Jews in the US-occupied zone of Germany warmly welcomes the publication of its comrade Max Kaufmann's book, in which he recounts the tragedy of Latvian Jewry, which was once so splendid and flourishing. The decision to write such a work and the author's creative power are equally admirable.

The homeland of Latvian Jewry is soaked not only with the blood of innocent Latvian Jewish men, women and children; in addition, countless transports of Jewish men, women and children from nearly all the countries of Europe were murdered on Latvian soil by the bestial, cowardly German and Latvian Nazi bandits.

The work of our comrade Max Kaufmann is the first to recount, more or less comprehensively and objectively, the sufferings and tragic destruction of the splendid Jewry of Latvia, and to inform the world about the role played by the local Latvian population, which largely shares the blame for this tragedy with the rapacious and bestial Nazi bandits.

We are absolutely convinced that Max Kaufmann's work will receive a very strong response and that the world will at last understand the depth of the tragedy that has affected, among others, the small band of surviving Latvian Jews.

* Jeannot Lewenson, Chairman of the Association of Jews of Latvia in Germany

Nochum Senitzki*

Foreword (German Edition 1947)

The martyrology and the destruction of the Jewish community in Latvia is linked with the fate of a part of the Jews of Vilna, who were brought to Riga on 25 September 1943** after the liquidation of the Vilna ghetto and who shared with the Latvian Jews the final path of martyrdom and all the stages of destruction.

The Kaiserwald concentration camp in Riga with its divisions – the HKP, Strazdumuiža, TWL, HVL, ABA, Dünawerke, Lenta, Meteor, the Balast Dam etc. – and, later on, the concentration camps in Germany – Stutthof etc. – are the milestones along the cruel, thorny path walked by the Jews of Latvia and Vilna.

The book *Churbn Lettland*, which describes the destruction of the once-splendid Jewish community in Latvia, is also part of the history of the destruction of Vilna Jewry. A specific and precise picture is provided in the descriptions of the Stutthof and Buchenwald concentration camps, in which I lived through difficult times together with the author.

The author, Max Kaufmann, is the only person to date*** who has told the story of *Churbn Lettland*.

We salute him and hope that his work will be well-received.

* Nochum Senitzki, engineer, Chairman of the Association of Vilna Jews in Germany.

** [Ed. Gertrude Schneider: September 25, 1943]

*** [Ed.: 1947]

Max Kaufmann

Preface

"Ani Hagewer raa oni baschewer ewrato!"

"I am a man who has known affliction, I have felt the rod of his wrath."

(Lamentations of Jeremiah, 3:1)

This book describes one of the gravest crises – in fact, the near-extinction – of our Jewish-Latvian kibbutz (community).

Let the book speak for itself!

I would like to preface it with a few words of a personal nature.

I do not want the reader to regard the following report as a memoir in the proper sense of the word, but rather as the outpourings of a heavy heart that wishes to rid itself of all these terrible experiences and to forget them.

Six dreadful years lie behind me, and only now am I beginning to write down my memories in *Churbn Lettland*. I often tried to do so during those years of suffering, but every time I was dragged from one ghetto to another, from one concentration camp to another, I had to destroy what I had written down. The same thing happened to many of my faithful friends from Riga who were good writers and kept diaries or wrote down their impressions. All of these documents are either buried in the earth or have disappeared altogether.

This is the only explanation of the fact that although I have read a number of books about ghettos and concentration camps since I have been living abroad, the world still knows little about the fate of us Latvian Jews. Therefore, I decided to fill that gap and to describe in my book the destruction of the once so beautiful Jewish community in Latvia.

It is a very, very difficult task, even if I were a great poet or writer.

Who can understand or believe that so much cruelty was at all possible in the twentieth century?

However, unfortunately, the events I have described here are facts.

I wish to build, in my own way, a lasting memorial to all those who have perished.

I wish to provide material for the future historians who will one day describe the tremendous destruction of our Jewish people.

I wish to give to those of my countrymen who have not been in Latvia during the past few years a clear picture of the misfortune and the sufferings of the Latvian Jews.

For the few remaining Jews who survived their persecution, **I wish** to hold up a clear mirror to the difficult time they have lived through.

I wish to let the world know how large a role was played by the native Latvian population in our tragedy, and above all **I wish** to give our young people a true picture of the martyrdom and destruction of their brothers and sisters, their parents and grandparents, so that they will always remember their sufferings and prove worthy of them.

"Zchoir ascher oso lcho Amolek!"

(Remember what the Amalekites did to you! Deuteronomy 25:17)

Whole countries are in ruins, a whole world was drowned in blood and tears and the Jewish people with it. Yes, in this catastrophe they paid the highest price. Nonetheless we, the remaining Latvian Jews, hope that a new and free life may come for us all!

Finally, I wish to remark that it seems an irony of fate that I am writing my book in Germany – in Munich, the very place where Hitler, the originator of all our sufferings, came to power.

"Ki eichcho uchal weroisi beroo ascher imzo et ami?
Weichcho uchal weroisi bawdoin moladi?"

"For how can I bear to see the calamity which is coming upon my people?
Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?"
(Esther 8:6-7)

Munich, July 1947

Part I

The History of the Jewish Kibbutz (Community) in Latvia

In order to give a precise picture of the Jewish community in Latvia to my countrymen who have not been in Latvia for a long time, I have decided to summarize briefly the history of the Jewish community up to the German invasion of Latvia.

A small Latvia was created from the former Russian provinces of Courland and Livland, as well as part of the province of Vitebsk, with the help of the half-Jew Zigfrīds Meierovics (his father, Dr. Meierowitz, was a Jew).

Latvia consisted of four provinces: Latgale, Vidzeme, Zemgale and Kurzeme. In 1941 it had about 100,000 Jews. Most of the Jews, about 40,000, lived in the capital city, Riga; next in terms of their Jewish population were the cities of Daugavpils and Liepāja. As far as small towns go, Jews generally preferred the province of Latgale and liked Vidzeme the least. Besides being good craftsmen and very talented skilled workers, the Jews made up the largest proportion of merchants in the large cities and small towns. Latvian companies in all industries were also highly developed by the Jews (Milmann, R. Kaplan, the Hoff brothers, K. Misroch, R. Feldhuhn and others). The export and import of raw materials and finished products was in Jewish hands (Behrmann, Rosengarten, Schalit etc.) because of their good connections with the outside world. The Jewish bankers, for example the Lewstein brothers, Schmuljan and Epstein (from Liepāja) were also well-known abroad. Large and small banks were founded with Jewish capital (the Nordic Bank and others). The founders of the Nordic Bank were Leiba Minsker, Ber Lewitas, Rabinowitsch, Kirschbaum and others. Leading positions were held by Saul Gurewitsch and Silitzki.

After Latvia became independent, it was the Jews who introduced it to the world and more or less got it off the ground. Latvia's good economic standing was created by the Jews alone. The Latvians themselves are an industrious farming people. For years they were subjugated by the German barons and had no talent for trade. Only a few Latvians became manufacturers, with the help of the Latvian government (1935), which endeavored to create a purely Latvian industrial sector. This effort, however, cost the Latvian government quite a bit of money. The country's currency was also created by the Jews (Fried-

mann). The Jews played a large role in cultural life. It was Jewish professors who occupied the lecterns of the university and the polytechnic college. Moreover, there were many physicians who had an international reputation (Professor Wladimir Mintz, Dr. Idelsohn), musicians (Professor Metz etc.) and numerous other scholars and artists. Jews also played a huge role in the legal profession and the drafting of all the laws of Latvia. In this area they were supported by the Jewish lawyer Oskar Osipowitsch Grusenberg of Petersburg. In Riga itself there were many extremely talented Jewish lawyers.

Jewish religious life was very vigorous. There were Jewish schools that provided instruction in Yiddish and Hebrew, as well as a few *yeshivas* and *Talmud toras* (Talmudic colleges and schools). In all the large cities and small towns of Latvia there were splendid synagogues and houses of prayer.

Besides the two *gaonim* rabbis (Talmudic authorities) – the Rogachev rabbi (Josif Rosin) and Meier Simcha (Kahan), who both lived in Daugavpils and whom the reader will get to know in the chapter "The Jewish City of Dvinsk" — there were many other great rabbis. In Riga it was Mendel Sack, in Jelgava Owtschinski, in Liepāja Polonski, in Zilupe and later in Friedrichstadt it was Paul, in Tukums it was the old rabbinic dynasty of Lichtenstein.

All of the names cited above are associated with the publication of various works of religious philosophy. Also well-known were the rabbis Kilow (Riga), Jemin (Viļāni), Donchio (Ludza), Schub and Klatzkin (Krāslava), Plazinski (Višķi) and many others. Only a few of them died a natural death; all the others died as martyrs. Rabbi Kook, who died in Palestine, was also born in Latvia.

Jewish religious life in Riga was strengthened thanks to the arrival of the world-renowned Lubavitcher Rabbi Schneersohn. The deputy Dubin enabled him to come from Russia. In his Riga residence on Pulkveža Brieža Street one could meet many *Hasidim* (pious ones) from Latvia and the rest of the world. Shortly before the war he moved to America together with his whole family. His son-in-law Gurarie also followed him, and later on so did Chodakow.*

Jewish liturgical singing was cultivated in all the towns of Latvia. The creator of music for the synagogue was Rosowski. World-famous singers graduated from his school (Hermann Jadlowker among others), and his compositions are known throughout the world. After his death, his position at the synagogue in Gogol Street in Riga was taken over by Hermann Jadlowker. Fortunately, he emigrated to Palestine before the outbreak of the war. Cantor Rabetz (now

* [Ed.: in the English Hodakov.]

in Africa) and Abramis were also very popular and well-known in Riga. Cantor Rabinowitsch was active for a long time in the great choral synagogue of Daugavpils. Several important singers graduated from his school as well. After his death his place was taken by Friedland. Cantor Schlossberg was also born in Latvia (Ilūkste) and thus bore the name of "Leibele Illukster". Among the most significant conductors of Riga were the Jews Pisetzki, Sklar and Abramis Jr.

In Daugavpils and Riga there were also well-equipped trade schools, whose graduates included leading professional craftsmen.

In Riga there was a splendid Jewish club with a permanent Jewish theater; there were also two other clubs, which bore the names of our great Jewish poets Bjalik and Peretz. There were also numerous clubs in the provinces.

The Jewish university students had their own fraternities (Hasmonea, Vetulia). The Jewish polytechnic society was also very well-known in intellectual circles, and the OZE (health services) and OPE (education) organizations were active throughout Latvia.

There was a daily Jewish newspaper called "Frühmorgen" (Early Morning), edited by Latzki-Bertoldi (Palestine) and Dr. Hellmann. One of its co-workers was the writer Herz-Mowschowitz.* A monthly illustrated journal, "Jüdische Bilder" (Jewish Images), published by Jakob Brahms, had a large circle of readers not only in Latvia but in the Jewish world as a whole. The artist Michail Jo, among others, worked for it. The Russian press with all of its well-known newspapers such as "*Segodnia*" (Today) and "*Segodnia Wiet-scherom*" (This Evening) was actually in Jewish hands. The owners were Jakob Brahms and Dr. Boris Poljak. The aforementioned newspapers had the Jewish co-workers Michael Milrud (Editor), Boris Oretschkin, Lecturer Weintraub, Professor Lasersohn, Anry Gry, the Machtus brothers, Lewin and others. All of them without exception wrote well. The owner, Jakob Brahms, was known for his excellent lead articles. The large modern printing house for these newspapers, "Rīta", was also under Jewish ownership (Kopelowitsch, now in Palestine).

The Zionist movement was especially well-received in Latvia.

The Nurock brothers, who were rabbis, and the lawyer Trohn were the veterans of the movement, and they participated in the first Zionist congress in Basel (Switzerland).

* [Ed.:The real name of the well-known journalist and historian of Jewish press in Latvia is Gershon Mowschowitz]

Later on, the revisionist Zionist movement (Betar) began in Riga in the person of Wolf Jabotinsky. He had founded his party on 17 December 1923 in Riga after his lecture at the Trade Union Club in Kēniņa Street. The other founding members were Aron Propes and the engineer Michelsohn. After a time they were joined by Dr. Jakob Hoffmann, Benia Lubotzki and Moses Joelsohn.

A socialist Zionist movement (Poalej Zion) also existed in Riga. The Jewish socialist party, Bund, also exerted a strong influence on Jewish working people. The Bund party was most strongly represented in Latgale.

The Mizrachi and Agudat Israel parties had a decisive influence on the religious life of Jewish Latvia.

The Jewish Communists were also active, largely illegally until the introduction of the Soviet system. Thus many of them were incarcerated in the prisons of Riga and Daugavpils, and their names – Breger, Maitlis, Zipe, Rafael Schäftlin, Zenziper, Nochum Rappaport, Bubi Tuw, Isaak Kohn and others – were very familiar there. After the establishment of Soviet power in Latvia, many Jews were appointed to responsible positions. For example, Dr. Joffe Jr. became the People's Vice-Commissar (Deputy Minister) of Health Services. The blind Professor Schatz-Anin also played an important role.

In the Latvian Saeima (Parliament) there were always Jewish representatives, such as Fischmann, the Rabbis Mordechai and Aron Nurock, Mordechai Dubin, Professor Lasersohn, Dr. Maisel and Simon Wittenberg.

Rabbi Mordechai Nurock was even appointed once by President Čakste to form a Latvian government. Deputy Dubin also exerted a great deal of influence on governing circles (Dr. Ulmanis).

Until 15 May 1934 – that is, until Dr. Ulmanis seized state power – national cultural autonomy officially existed. The head of the Jewish division at the Ministry of Education was first Dr. Landau and later Chodakow. Morein had a position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Samunow at the state bank.

In the beginning, the Jews in Latvia did not do badly. But in the final years (from 1934 on) various anti-Semitic currents arose, thanks to the proximity of Fascist Germany. These currents originated in the well-known Latvian Pērkonkrusts (Swastika) organization. There were also various restrictions on Jews in the fields of trade and education.

After the Soviets set up their first bases in Ventspils and Liepāja in 1939, many wealthy Jews (Owsej Misroch, Felix Glück, Adolf Kaplan, Orelowitsch, Kopilow, Bazalkin, Schmuljan Jr., Elia Scher and others) sold their businesses within a year and emigrated abroad. In this way they saved their lives. Still

others, such as Dr. Poljak, Jakob Brahms, the industrialist Rafael Feldhuhn and others, who happened to be abroad at the time, did not return to Latvia.

The establishment of Soviet power in Latvia then changed the situation of the Jews in general. The Jewish population of Riga increased to more than 50,000 as Jews moved in from the provinces. The larger merchants in the provinces did not wait for their businesses to be nationalized, but moved to the large cities before the Soviets could notice them. Likewise, the Jewish intelligentsia of the provinces, whose professional skills were no longer wanted, found work in the large cities. On 14 June 1941 the Soviets began a large-scale resettlement of the bourgeoisie to the Russian interior. This involved about 3,500 Jews in Riga and about 5,000 in Latvia as a whole, which amounted to 5% of the entire Jewish population. The list of resettled individuals reveals that many very wealthy people, for instance Misroch Sr. and Schmuljan Sr., were able to stay, whereas minor citizens such as craftsmen who were satisfied with the Soviets, or even people who were devoted to the Soviets and held responsible positions, were resettled. Only 1.25% of the entire Latvian population was affected. It is worth noting that the Latvians spread rumors to the effect that the resettlement lists had been drawn up by the Jews, which was absolutely untrue, since a far larger percentage of the Jews than of the Latvians was affected. The false accusations were only a pretext to retaliate against the Jewish population.

With the introduction of the Soviet system in Latvia, the economic situation of the Jews changed as well. For a short time the wealthy individuals such as factory owners still had the possibility of transferring their fortunes to foreign countries and selling their movable property. Their real estate, however, was nationalized. The small and medium-sized merchants were able to hold on to their businesses and workshops until the outbreak of the war. During these years it was possible for them to earn a great deal of money. But already people were no longer interested in money in itself; instead, they invested it in valuables and other material assets. During this period the Jews, like others, had more property than ever before. Although the number of Jews in Latvia at that time was only about 94,000 – that is, 5,500 fewer than before – the Jewish community nonetheless entered World War II from a very strong economic position.

War 1941 – 1945

The Germans March into Riga

The sudden declaration of war by Fascist Germany against Soviet Russia (on 22 June 1941) had a very great impact on Riga. In the very first days one saw that the enemy was advancing rapidly. Although the Soviets issued a decree that nobody was permitted to leave his or her place of work – which meant that Riga would be defended – this did not give people any feeling of reassurance. On the contrary, the Latvians sabotaged all the decrees and created the well-known "fifth column". It was all the more astonishing that during the first few days two well-known Jews of Riga, Nison Trubek (director of the Delka Company) and the engineer Kagan (of the Jessen family), were shot for being members of this fifth column. This was clearly an act of revenge by the Latvians. In the meantime, the Soviets moved the German and Austrian Jews out of Riga in order to transport them to Russia. These were the same people who had previously been gotten out of Germany with great effort through the skill of Mordechai Dubin. At the time, these persecuted people had received a warm welcome in Riga and found a pleasant home waiting for them. Now they suffered an especially tragic fate, for to the Germans the Jews were Jews and to the Soviets the Jews were Germans. Later, the transport to Russia turned out to be a stroke of luck for those who were affected, for thanks to Soviet power many of them survived.

The Latvians fought on all fronts; they shot from the roofs and attics of their houses at the units of the Red Army that were in retreat. In the meantime, German planes could already be seen dropping bombs on the city's outskirts. On the radio we heard that Kovno (the capital of Lithuania) had been occupied by the Germans. The Lithuanian partisans were fighting just as the Latvians were. Every person one met had just one question: "What should we do?"

There was no official evacuation, but a few trains were standing in the station. Understandably, they were stormed by a crowd of people, but for most of these people it was impossible to leave by train. Moreover, people said that the enemy was bombarding the trains, railroad stations and railway tracks, so it was impossible to get through. The city of Daugavpils, they said, was already occupied by the Germans and so only the stretch toward Valka-Pskov-Leningrad was open. Many Jews who got no seats in the trains came back from the railroad station. Others halted trucks and begged the drivers to take them along. On the way, many drivers demolished their vehicles on purpose and then disappeared. A large portion of the civilian population was also taken

along by the retreating Red Army. Women with their children sat on the tanks that were rolling away. Some of the Jewish young people who had worked for the Soviets decided to leave on foot. Many of them were stopped on the road by the Latvians and then handed over to the Germans; others died during this march.

There were also many Jews who did not want to part from their possessions, which they had worked so hard to acquire. Though the reasons for staying were extremely varied, there was one thing nobody could imagine: that the destruction by the Germans and by the local population would be so merciless. We knew, of course, that we could expect no good from the enemy.

As for me, escape was entirely out of the question. At the time, my son was in the hospital with a broken foot and I had to bring him home from there, since everything was falling apart. Because he was confined to bed, we had to stay in any case. Only a few Jews came to Riga from the provinces of Kurzeme and Zemgale, which the enemy was already starting to occupy. By this time the number of Jews in Riga had already decreased by 10,000 through the evacuation. Thus when the German army marched in, there were still more than 40,000 Jews in Riga. On the night of 29 June 1941, strong pressure from the Germans could already be felt in the city. The Red Army withdrew in a totally disorganized way toward the province of Vidzeme. The soldiers were tired, hungry and thirsty. We put out pails of water on the street for them, we collected food from the neighbors and threw bread to them. But this was only a drop in the bucket!

In the meantime, the Germans were bombarding the city. The bombs were dropped near the old city center, where the bridges were. But the bridges had already been blown up in the previous few days by the retreating Russians. St. Peter's church, known to us all, which had the highest steeple in the city, topped by a rooster, burned down. It was not set aflame by the Soviets, as Latvian propaganda would have it (even photos of this fictional deed were distributed); it has now been established that it was destroyed by the German military forces.

The day of transition, 30 June, was very quiet. All one could see was individual Red Army soldiers who had been left behind. There were no people on the streets, only tanks on various street corners, whose task was to cover the Red Army's retreat. In the meantime, the Latvians prepared to greet the enemy. The red-and-white Latvian flag was brought out of storage; people also had flags bearing the swastika ready. The Pērkonkrusts organization was al-

ready working out the plans for our destruction, having no doubt that the enemy would approve of them.

On 1 July the German army forced its way into the city. The Latvians greeted the enemy with flowers, wearing their Sunday best. All the houses were decorated and ornamented with flags. The radio broadcast the old Latvian national hymn, "*Dievs Svētī Latviju*" (God Bless Latvia), and also the Horst Wessel song. All of this made a very strong impression on the Latvians, and they were convinced that now a new era of independence would begin. But all this was only a well-prepared prelude on the part of the Germans. Power was never officially handed over to the Latvians; moreover, the playing of the Latvian hymn was never again permitted. On the same day, 1 July 1941, the Latvians announced on the radio that all nationalistic Latvians should register immediately for the struggle against the internal enemy (the Jews). The gathering point for this *Aktion* was the headquarters of the Aizsargi (Guards). This was the home of the professional associations. There, weapons and red-and-white armbands were distributed to everyone who registered, without exception. Every group was assigned a district that it was supposed to "deal with". The call to nationalistic Latvians is associated with the name of the Latvian Captain Weiß.

The Beginning of the Destruction of the Jews of Riga (1 July – 25 October 1941)

I.

After the German occupation of Riga, Jewish life came to a virtual standstill. On the first day no Jews went out onto the streets, and there were no incidents.

In the early morning of 2 July I received a phone call to tell me that one of my brothers and his son-in-law had been arrested. I immediately got in touch with my friends and close acquaintances and found out that the Latvians had begun to arrest Jewish men in the city. They were going from house to house and dragging out my fellow Jews. These were brought in groups to the police headquarters, police stations and prisons. The captors were Latvian youths in civilian clothing armed with weapons and wearing red-and-white armbands. Of course there was no lack of beatings and looting. Many people were even shot dead in their homes (e.g. Gogol Street 7). That same morning the telephones belonging to Jews were cut off. It was dangerous to go out into the street, but people did not feel safe at home either. All the Jewish tenants of our building

gathered together in the apartment of our neighbor Dr. Magalif to discuss the situation. We could think of no way out and were forced to accept our fate.

The next day it was my turn. Armed Latvian youths forced their way into my apartment, plundered whatever they could find, and took me and my son, who was still sick, away with them, along with the other Jewish tenants of the building. Then they led us all together to the police headquarters, or prefecture. On the way we were joined by more and more Latvians who walked alongside us and beat us mercilessly. They shouted, "Jews, Bolsheviks!" and jeered, "Stalin's unconquered army is in retreat!" As we passed the monument to the great Latvian poet Blaumanis, I saw my friend the lawyer Dr. Singel. He had been so badly beaten that he was covered with blood. He was accompanied by heavily armed guards. He signalled to me with his hand, as if to say, "My fate is sealed." And indeed he was murdered the same day.

Trucks stood ready at the canal near the prefecture to take us to the prisons. As we walked into the courtyard of the prefecture, it became clear to me that a catastrophe was breaking in on us.

II.

The large prefecture building was full of Jews. Screams were heard from every direction, so horribly were the Latvian murderers tormenting their victims. Their sadism knew no bounds.

Old and sick people were brought into the courtyard without underwear, totally naked. People who had formerly played an important role in society now stood there beaten and bleeding. They were dragged around by their beards. Young women who had been brought in were stripped naked in the courtyard and thrown into the cellar rooms of the prefecture to be used for orgies. Venerable old Riga Jews were dragged here, doused with water, and beaten; their captors made fun of them. Moreover, they sought out Jews with especially full beards and forced them to polish the Latvians' shoes with them. This was so-called Latvian culture!

So far, no uniformed German had yet appeared in the police headquarters. I stood in the courtyard all night with my son and my neighbor Osia Pukin, since there was no room in the prefecture itself. We did try to go upstairs, but it was impossible. This was lucky for us, because only this saved us from certain death. All of those who were upstairs ended up in prison and were shot. Many friends and acquaintances passed by me; among others, I saw my good friend Preiss. The next morning we were taken out of the courtyard to work. My son and I had to fill up the trenches opposite the Polytechnic College. On

the way there, we were beaten again. It was unusually hot and we were tormented by thirst, but of course we didn't dare ask for something to drink.

Thus we were chased until late evening from one task to another. Once again we spent the night under the open sky in the prefecture courtyard. The next day we had to load tires from a large warehouse onto trucks. The well-known Riga jeweler Widser worked with us. He was moaning and weeping because he had lost his son. After we had finished loading the tires we returned to a large room in the prefecture in which there was a piano. The Latvians, who clearly were sadists, held truncheons in their hands and made us do drills; for instance, they forced us to sing and play the piano. They ordered some of the Jewish singers to sing Nazi songs that they didn't know. Finally they forced all of us to sing the "Internationale". None of us knew why we were being forced to sing this particular song. They explained to us, once again with their truncheons, that this would be the last time we sang it. I felt my strength leaving me and feared I would be unable to stand the further tortures of the Latvian murderers. My greatest sympathy was for my young son, but of course I was unable to help him. Fortunately, at this moment my neighbor Pukin appeared, accompanied by a German soldier. The soldier requested that my son and I be released so that we could work as decorators at the field commander's headquarters.

III.

We now left the house of martyrdom with relief and went to the command headquarters across the street from the City Opera. I was recommended to *Spiess* (Sergeant Major) Lockenfitz as a capable craftsman. He was convinced of my ability and gave me various instructions. We also received a pass that protected us from the Latvian henchmen.

My wife's joy at our return was of course indescribable. She told us many things she had heard in the city during our absence. She had not reckoned on us returning at all. She herself could still move about unharmed, as she looked very Aryan. Many of her stories seemed totally unbelievable, but unfortunately all of them were later confirmed.

From my balcony I saw the burning of the great synagogue on Gogol Street and of the Old-New synagogue and the Hasidic houses of prayer in the Moscow suburb. The synagogue on Stabu Street was not destroyed until later. The flames claimed victims everywhere, because Jews were driven into them to die. Thirty Jews and Rabbi Kilow were killed in the synagogue on Stabu Street. The holy *torahs* (holy scrolls) were dragged out of all these syna-

gogues, defiled and burned. Many Jews, dressed in their prayer shawls and *talith*, flung themselves into the flames to save the *torahs*. All of them were killed.

The only synagogue the murderers left standing in Riga was the large, well-known Peitavas synagogue in the old town center. It was spared only because it stood in the midst of apartment buildings. But its interior was demolished like the others.

IV.

In the meantime, the Latvians had moved the staff of Pērkoņkrusts (Swastika) to the house of the banker Schmuljan on Valdemāra Street. We knew that this was now the home of the notorious Pērkoņkrusts murderers such as Arājs, Cukurs, Tīdemanis, Razums and Freimanis. Moreover, they attracted a considerable portion of the Latvian intelligentsia from the student fraternities to their side. Many of these people, who have hundreds and thousands of murders on their conscience, are living today out in the world in total freedom. They have simply made use of the right to asylum that is guaranteed by the great democracies. At that time, Riga alone did not satisfy their bloodlust, so they organized gangs – here too with the help of the Latvian intelligentsia. These gangs moved from city to city, from town to town, in order to kill the Jewish population there in the most bestial way.

The cellar rooms of the former home of the banker Schmuljan were quickly transformed into prison cells. Now countless Jewish women and men were brought there either to be shot immediately or transferred from there to regular prisons.

V.

I myself had to work, together with my son and my friend Pukin, in the field headquarters. Every morning we went to work together, carrying our pass, which protected us from the Latvians. One time, as we were walking through the beautiful Wöhrmann Park in Riga, the Latvians drove us out of it. Nor can I forget how once during the first few days, as we rode in a streetcar, the woman conductor could not get over her outrage. She was beside herself with fury over the fact that a Jew would dare to do "something like this" at all. She immediately rang the bell to stop the streetcar and we were literally thrown out.

In addition to my work as a decorator I was also used at the headquarters as a cleaner, furnace stoker, and sweeper of the sergeant major's room and office. This sergeant major, who was regarded as the master of the house, was a

very decent and sympathetic person. During the time I spent there, a large work crew of Jews was occupied mainly with bringing wood into the cellar and managing the transport and storage of the furniture stolen from Jewish homes. A Latvian artist named Pudelis pointed out to the commandership the Jewish homes that were most worth looting. My home also fell victim to these thieves. During my absence the Germans went to my home together with Pudelis, stole all the objects of value, and had them brought to the headquarters. They were immediately used to furnish the private rooms and office of General Bambergs. For nearly two years I now had to clean my own Persian carpets, but what was I to do?

In the field headquarters, we soon got to know the gendarmerie administration, which in those days protected us from the Latvians in emergencies. Later on, the Jewish workers at the headquarters received certificates stating that it was not permitted to use them for other work or to confiscate any further items from their homes. Nonetheless, one day the Latvians dared to go to a house in Matīsa Street to arrest and imprison eighteen people who worked with us. This incident was reported to the sergeant major. Moreover, the Latvians had destroyed the work passes that he had signed and stamped with the field commandership's official stamp. He flew into a rage and decided to free "his Jews" immediately. To this end, he and some of his soldiers drove, heavily armed, to the prison. He had with him a list of the imprisoned Jews and ordered the Latvians to release them at once. All of them were released except for a barber. "Where's my face-polisher?" the sergeant major called out, and he did not relent until the barber was brought in too. On this occasion he noticed an old Jew. "That's my rabbi," the sergeant major now said, and thus freed twenty-five instead of eighteen persons. Unfortunately, such people were not left in their positions for long; they were replaced with others who had different views.

VI.

In the meantime, in the city the situation of the Jews had worsened. Both the Gestapo and the *Wehrmacht* (army) were continually confiscating more and more furniture in order to furnish their own quarters. Without deliberation or planning, they took what they needed from Jewish homes. During these *Aktionen*, people were often simply brought out and murdered on the street. This happened, for example, on the other side of the Daugava to the lawyer Heide-

mann, the leather manufacturer Rosenthal, and a number of others. They were shot most cruelly on Uzvaras Laukums (Victory Square).*

Because the Germans were busy with their military affairs, power was still in the Latvians' hands. Nobody whatsoever thought of feeding the Jews. They were pulled out of the lines standing in front of the food stores if they were recognized as such. The atrocities against them were unending. For example, one day a vehicle full of armed Latvian volunteers drove to 9 Kalna Street in the Moscow suburb. All of the building's Jewish tenants were forced to leave it immediately and taken to the old Jewish cemetery. Here they were locked into the synagogue and burned alive in it. Similar *Aktionen* were also carried out in the new cemetery. The Jews who worked there were rounded up together with Cantor Mintz, who was well-known in Riga, and his family, locked into the prayer house and burned alive. The bones of these martyrs have now been found and given a solemn burial.

The only Jews who were treated somewhat better by the Latvians and were not arrested in the initial phase were the members of the Jewish Latvian Freedom Fighters association. But that did not last long either.

VII.

In the context of these notes I must relate the following experience. In mid-July 1941 I passed the house at 52 Krišjāņa Barona Street on my way back from work. A group of prisoners from the Red Army was being led past it. They were barefoot, ragged and starving. Latvians wearing red-and-white armbands were escorting them. At their head marched a young German wearing an armband with the swastika. At this moment, a poor Jewish woman holding her child by the hand came by. She was carrying a loaf of white bread, and out of sympathy she made the child give it to a Russian. When the German saw this, he shot the Jewish woman, the little girl and the Russian on the spot. The Latvians cheered!

At the same time I remember another incident that happened five years later. In mid-July 1946 on the same street, in front of the same house, we were passed by a group of German prisoners. Someone threw a full bottle from a top-floor window, and it fell on a prisoner and killed him immediately.

Thus the innocent blood that had been shed before was now avenged!

* [Ed.: According to Dr. Bernhard Press, the lawyer Alfons Heidemann was shot together with his brother-in-law Otto Schas on the night of July 20, 1941, in the Tornakalna Priedes, a pine grove near Victory Square.]

The following experience also belongs here. At that time a Jewish woman worked at the field headquarters together with me and the others. Her name was Ellis and she had been born in Hungary. She was a professional chanson singer and piano player at the well-known Riga night club Alhambra. Now she worked as a cleaning woman at the headquarters, mainly in the rooms of the commander, Captain Fuhrmann. He noticed her and decided to save her. He had Aryan identity papers issued for her. Later on, when the situation grew dangerous, he sent Mrs. Ellis to Vienna with a letter of recommendation that got her a job as a singer on the radio. By chance, the all-powerful Minister of Propaganda Goebbels heard her on the radio in Berlin. He realized that when she sang in the style of Zarah Leander, she performed the songs better than the famous Swedish Zarah herself. With great delight, he now told the people around him that he had found a "genuine" German Zarah and would soon make it possible to listen to her in Berlin. The new "German" star was now invited to come to Berlin. She was asked to report directly to the great Goebbels, who would organize a concert for her with a select government audience. The director of Radio Vienna was in despair, for he knew all about this star who was not quite "kosher". What to do? It was decided that "Zarah" would be declared ill. Thus the "German" Zarah was saved, and today she is walking around freely in Vienna with Jewish identity papers.

VIII.

The Latvians' cruelties worsened from day to day. They would simply round up Jews on the street and force them to do all kinds of work; they not only beat them mercilessly but murdered many of them.

For example, one group of ten Jews who were repairing a damaged bridge over the Daugava in an Organisation Todt (OT) work group were simply thrown into the water, where they drowned.

The looting of Jewish homes became more and more frequent. The owners were not only robbed, but many of them were killed on the spot. The Latvian murderers even went as far as to simply hack off the fingers of living people merely to gain possession of their rings.

If apartments were needed, the Jewish tenants were thrown out on the spot without being allowed to take a single thing with them. There were two methods: either the people were arrested and taken to the murderers' headquarters at the Pērkonkrusts center, or they were put into prison. Nobody returned alive from either of these places.

One day Lecturer Weintraub came to me in despair. He had had bad luck: after making a lecture tour in America he had returned at the worst possible time. Now his apartment too had been taken away from him, and he stayed with me for a few days. Shortly after that he tried to commit suicide, but was saved. On his second attempt he succeeded.

Many Jews were driven by their desperate situation to commit suicide. The Friedmann family killed themselves by gas poisoning (both husband and wife were doctors).^{*} The well-known jeweler and circus entrepreneur Tabatschnik and the shoe dealer Fraenkel also died horrible deaths.

Terrible news came from the prisons (see the chapter on the Central and Terminal Prisons). There was no longer any medical help for Jews. All of them were thrown out of the city hospitals. Even the Bikur Cholim Jewish hospital (Milmann Foundation) on Maskavas Street was cleared out by force. Later on, an SS field hospital was set up there.

The press was full of inflammatory articles against the Jews, and leaflets illustrated with the most fantastic pictures were distributed (see the chapter "The Press in Riga During the German Occupation").

IX.

At the end of July the Riga field commandship was changed into a city commandship. An authority for civilian affairs was also set up. Its director was Nachtigall, a Reich German. He was the one who signed the first regulations concerning the Jews. Regulation One banned them from public places. Jews were no longer permitted to use city facilities, parks and swimming pools. The second regulation required Jews to wear a patch in the form of a yellow star (*Mogen David*). It had to be about 10 centimeters wide and be sewn onto one's clothing on the left side of the chest. Violations of this regulation were punishable by death.

But the Jews of Riga wore their stars with pride!

Another regulation decreed that the Jews should receive 50% less food than the Aryans; and they could obtain even these reduced rations only at the risk of their lives.

^{*} [Ed.: According to Dr. B.Press, the Friedmanns killed themselves with morphine injections. Press saw their corpses at the Jewish hospital.]

X.

Buoyed up by their victories on all fronts, the Germans decided to gradually take over civilian rule entirely and thus organize everything according to their own pattern.

Calm and composed in their typically German way, they began to do so in August 1941. The Latvian language was recognized as the country's second official language.

In order to cope with these extensive organizational tasks, they summoned the Baltic Germans to help them. The latter had previously been called on by Hitler to leave the Baltic countries. These anti-Semites were now the ringleaders of every measure. The Baltic German Altmeyer took over the city government. He signed every order to confiscate apartments and so on. In mid-August all the Jews in Riga were registered. This took place at two locations in the city center and one in the Moscow suburb. I had to register, together with my family, in Cēsu Street. There, all the Jews were badly beaten by the Latvians.

This registration was carried out in order to determine how many Jews were still living in Riga after the many murders in the city and the executions in the prisons (see the chapter on the Central and Terminal Prisons).

In the meantime, further regulations were decreed:

1) The Jews had to wear a second yellow star (*Mogen David*) in the middle of their backs.

2) They were forbidden to use the sidewalks.

One could now see the Jews walking to work, one behind the other and marked with two yellow stars, in the gutters of the streets of Riga next to the sidewalks. Of course there were all kinds of accidents due to cars and the like.

At first we were very downcast by this treatment, but we soon grew accustomed to it, as well as to the jeers of the local people.

XI.

The Gestapo arrived during the first few days after the Germans' entry into Riga.

Officially they took over all the prisons on 11 July 1941, but on this date the prisons already contained a significantly reduced number of Jews. The Latvians had made sure of that!

A Jewish work group was forced to remove the furniture from Jewish homes. The first confiscation took place in the large house of the Nesterows in

Andreja Pumpura Street. After that, not only all the Jewish homes but also all the Jewish shops on Ausekļa Street in the Vorburg district were occupied.

The Gestapo offices were set up in the former Ministry of Agriculture building on Raiņa Boulevard. Not only Germans but also Latvians and Russians were employed there. A special division with an examining magistrate was created for Jewish affairs, and the well-known Gestapo methods were introduced. All too soon, the cellar of this building became well-known to us Jews. Anyone who entered it could reckon with his death; at the very least, people were sent from there to prison, which also meant the end – that is to say, death by starvation.

A large black flag hung next to the swastika flag on top of the beautiful city administration building across the street. The Gestapo administrative offices were located there. Later on, the Gestapo headquarters for all of Latvia were set up in a former museum building at the corner of Kalpaka Boulevard and Alexander Boulevard. It was full of the loyal pupils of the monstrous criminal Himmler.

Their names were: Dr. Lange, Krause, Migge, Kaufmann, Roschmann, Deiberg, Nickel, Jenner and many, many others. All of them shared the blame for the mass murders of the Jews. The reader will hear more about them later.

The Police General of Ostland, General Jeckeln (reportedly Himmler's brother-in-law), had his residence in the former Saeima (Parliament) building on Jēkaba Street, formerly known as the Knights' Hall.

Now Jews died horrible deaths in this palace of "chivalry" too.

On 5 February 1946 after the liberation, when General Jeckeln and six other generals were hanged by the Soviets on Uzvaras Laukums (Victory Square), we surviving Jews felt tremendous joy.

The trial of Jeckeln was held in the building of the former Latvian Association, now known as the DOKA (House of the Red Army), in Merķeļa Street. In response to State Prosecutor Zawjalow's questions he replied, "The number of Jews brought to Latvia from abroad is just as unknown to me as is the number of Jews killed in Latvia. Even before we Germans assumed power, so many Jews had been exterminated by the Latvians that a precise number could no longer be determined."

When he was asked, "Why were Jews brought to Latvia from abroad to be exterminated?", he answered: "Latvia was the appropriate venue for these murders."

We survivors are only too familiar with the "appropriate venue" which the Latvians created at that time!

XII.

A special Bureau of Jewish Affairs was also set up in the prefecture. The business at hand was the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, which dealt with the issue of mixed marriages and the children produced by them. Men and women in mixed marriages were forced to divorce their spouses. If Aryan husbands refused to divorce their wives, the wives were sterilized. This murderous operation was performed on many Jewish women.

All of these prefectural matters were in the hands of the Latvian Captain Štiglitz.

Besides the prefecture, a Field Commissioner's Department was established. It was headed by Field Commissioner Drechsler. On the first anniversary of the conquest of Riga he delivered a great eulogy to the "loyal Latvians" in the State Opera House.

All of the later regulations against the Jews were connected with Drechsler.

After a special ministry had been founded for the eastern territories (Ostland) by the notorious Jew-killer Rosenberg, the equally virulent anti-Semite Lohse was appointed Commissioner of Ostland. As a reward for their loyalty and devotion to the Hitler regime, the Latvians were granted their own administration. A small puppet government headed by the Latvian General Danker was created. In my opinion Danker, who was half-German, felt more sympathy for the Germans than for the Latvians. The directors – that is, ministers – in his government were well-known Latvian public figures. The former Latvian President Kviēsis, now deceased, occupied an important position, as did the well-known Valdmanis. The former was Director of Justice, the latter Attorney General.

These "loyal servants" not only contributed a very great deal to the great Jewish catastrophe, but also poured oil on the fire whenever they could so as to make our situation even more difficult. This is how the so-called "liberal Latvian intelligentsia" behaved during that period.

XIII.

The situation of the Jews worsened from day to day. There was no longer anyone who could defend our cause. All of the socially important Jewish public figures of Riga either had been murdered or were in prison. At this time my comrade A. Pukin and I were friends with the lawyer Eljaschow. At that time, many members of the Jewish Latvian Freedom Fighters' Association were still at liberty, because some of the Latvians still respected this organization. But

when it came to looting, even they were not spared. Every day when I visited the lawyer Eljaschow I saw that another piece of his furniture was missing, taken away by the Latvians since my last visit.

My comrade Pukin and I persuaded Eljaschow – by taking full responsibility for his decision - to head the Jewish community of Riga. His wife, who was also a lawyer and very intelligent and clever, reinforced our efforts. We based our request on the fact that he, as Chairman of the Jewish Latvian Freedom Fighters' Association and a well-known public figure, would have a certain amount of influence on the Latvians. He accepted our suggestion and also persuaded the no less capable Blumenau (the elder of the Blumenau brothers) and the universally respected Grischa Minsker to work with him. Both of them had also played a large role in the Freedom Fighters' Association. Now these three men made a genuine effort to improve the Jews' situation, using all of their possibilities – but unfortunately without any success. They were not officially recognized by the Latvian administration, and they had no access to the German authorities.

I myself once tried to arrange an audience for them with Fuhrmann, who was the commander at that time, at the German Field Headquarters, where I was working. And Fuhrmann promised me to grant them an audience. When they arrived I had to lead them through the back door of the courtyard, but even so they were not received. Fuhrmann explained to me that he could not risk it.

In the meantime, a regulation was passed regarding the creation of a ghetto. An official representative body for Jewish affairs was appointed and recognized. The three aforementioned persons (Eljaschow, Blumenau and Minsker) were now joined by Kaufert (of the Zaslauks Manufacturing Co.) and Dr. Blumenfeld, and later on by a Vienna Jew named Schlitter, who had easier access to the Germans. These men wore wide blue-and-white armbands with a large Star of David on their left arms. These insignia gave them the right, among other things, to use the sidewalks and the streetcars.

XIV.

According to the regulation, "a ghetto in which all Jews have to be quartered must be established in Riga by 25 October 1941". The site of this ghetto included the left side of Maskavas (Moscow) Street, going from Lāčplēša Street to Jersikas Street and ending with Žīdu (Jews') Street next to the old Jewish cemetery. From there, the boundary extended along Lauvas Street to Lielā Kalna Street; then from the right side of Lielā Kalna Street along Daugavpils,

Jēkabpils, Katoļu, Sadovnika iela and Lāčplēša Streets back to Lielā Maskavas Street.

The creation of the ghetto now moved the Jewish center to the Moscow suburb. A large schoolhouse at 143 Lāčplēša Street was assigned to the Jewish Committee.

In the garden and the courtyard of this house one could meet an endless procession of Jews who had been thrown out of their homes, together with their last remaining belongings. The pharmacist Katzin (owner of the Golden Series) greatly helped these unfortunate people. Many Jews also came to find out about the regulations concerning them and to hear news from the city center.

The Jewish Committee created various authorities, including a Billeting Department, which was headed by Mrs. Blumenfeld (Peka). The Legal Department was headed by the lawyer Finkelstein, and economic affairs were the responsibility of Robert Schlomowitsch and many others.

The surviving Jewish intelligentsia and all the significant Jewish public figures now tried as actively as they could to alleviate the great misery of their coreligionists.

To enable the Jews to receive at least the 50% food ration allotted to them, shops were set up especially for them in the Moscow suburb. The first shop was opened in Sadovnika Street under the direction of Lewius (who had previously owned a clothing shop). Later the number of these shops increased significantly. The fact that now all Jews were forced to shop in the Moscow suburb eliminated the danger that they might have to stand in lines together with Aryans.

Food was handed out in exchange for special food stamps that were checked off in a food distribution register. The food stamps and the book were yellow and bore the title "*Žids*" and "*Jude*" (Jew) in large letters. Of course everybody stood in long lines in front of the shops, and thus the question arose of whether the Jews had the statutory right to stand on the sidewalk. It was decided that the Jews had to stand in the gutter next to the sidewalk!

In the meantime, a barbed-wire fence was erected in great haste around the new ghetto. Because one fence was deemed insufficient, a second one was erected as well. The first fenceposts were driven into the ground at the corner of Maskavas and Lāčplēša Streets, and from here the work proceeded rapidly. A few large buildings were left out of the fenced-in area, contrary to the law regarding the ghetto. This was a disadvantage for us. For example, on Katoļu Street a large corner building was excluded because it housed the Svetlanow brothers' knitwear factory. A carpentry shop at 22 Mazā Kalna Street, just in-

side the ghetto, was excluded; so were a small chemical factory on Ludzas Street near Lauvas Street and a lumberyard on Jersikas Street. A small wood-processing factory belonging to Aryans on Blech Square, which was so bloody for us, was also excluded from the ghetto. The Aryans who worked there now received special passes that gave them access to the ghetto. All of these factories were once again closed off from the ghetto on all sides with additional barbed wire so that the Aryans could have no contact with us whatsoever. Later the house on Mazā Kalna Street was handed over to the Jews and included in the Large Ghetto.

XV.

In a space where previously a few thousand people had lived, tens of thousands of people were now forced to exist. This neighborhood had been inhabited mostly by Russian workers who were adherents of the old Orthodox Church (*starobriadcy*). It had traditionally been regarded as the Russian center. Now, even though because of the ghetto, the Russian inhabitants were offered better and more comfortable apartments in the city, they did not want to part from their neighborhood. For them it was a tradition to have their splendid Orthodox churches near their homes.

The housing issue in the ghetto was one of the most difficult problems to solve. At first, six square meters were allotted per person; later, this space was reduced to four square meters. Every inch of space was utilized. Great struggles were fought in order to get an apartment. Both the *Wehrmacht* and the Gestapo had requisitioned the best houses for the Jews who worked for them. The Jews exploited their connections with the units they had worked for, and thus received better apartments. The Jewish Committee member Minsker finally put an end to this preferential treatment by forbidding people to come to the Billeting Department together with Aryans, including even high-ranking military officers, in connection with housing affairs.

My colleague Schnejer and I received two small rooms for ourselves and our families in the large building at 2 Mazā Kalna Street. My comrade's father-in-law Borkon, a lawyer from Daugavpils, also lived with us.

XVI.

The days until our move to the ghetto were already counted, and gradually people began to prepare for the move. One must imagine this move to be roughly similar to the Jews' exodus from Egypt (Isaiah – Mizrahim). Every-

thing happened *bchipozoin* (in haste). We were not allowed to take along large pieces of furniture, only at most our beds, small cupboards and the like.

Now people packed only the essentials, and everything else was left behind. Some people sold their things for practically nothing, and still others were paid nothing whatsoever for them. The Latvians allowed nothing at all to be taken out of certain houses.

The streets leading to the ghetto were jammed with small wagons carrying household goods. The Russian population moved in one direction toward the city center, the Jews in the opposite direction into the ghetto.

Not only did the professional movers demand high prices from us, they also took things away from us. In some cases they even took off with all of our belongings. But whom could we complain to? Nobody was responsible for prosecuting such incidents.

To "relieve" us further, the Latvians posted guards on Daugavpils Street and other streets; they took away everything they could from us and beat us mercilessly besides.

All of our weeping and screaming did not help us.

The hours were numbered and the ghetto had to be locked up.

The Large Riga Ghetto (25 October 1941 – 30 November 1941)

I.

The hammers were beating loud and fast: the ghetto had to be ready by a certain time!

The last hammer blows were heard at the Large Ghetto gate in Sadovnika Street. The ghetto was finished on schedule.

A new city, a new world!

A world full of cares and suffering!

A world that nobody wants to understand or can understand.

The ghetto was locked and the guard duty was handed over to the Latvians. They, our former neighbours, with whom we had built a shared life, now became our worst enemies. The Germans had handed us over to them, and they fulfilled all of the Germans' expectations.



Gate of the Riga Ghetto, photograph taken from outside the ghetto fence (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives # 25137)

On Saturday, 25 October 1941 we were locked off from the whole world. We were completely surrounded by enemies and felt as though we were in the lion's jaws.

But we Jews had already experienced so many difficult times and great losses in our history, and had emerged as the victors again and again. So we thought to ourselves on this 25 October as well: be the sacrifices ever so great, we'll come through, no matter what!

Today I sit in Germany, which we cursed so bitterly, and record the *churban* of our people. But in my spirit I already see a new, healthy generation that has been tried in battle! We have lost millions of people, but in the course of time we will perhaps replace them after all.

At this point I want to remind my readers of the words of one of our martyrs, who bravely called out to the enemy as he faced certain death – the rifles had already been aimed at him: "Don't think the Jewish people will be destroyed with my death; the Jewish people lives and will live forever!" (Herbert Machtus)

Our martyrs went to their death singing the Jewish hymn, the "Hatikva".
Am jisroel chaj! (The people of Israel live!)

II.

As soon as the ghetto was locked, the following decree was issued: "Anyone who goes too close to the barbed wire will be shot without previous warning." On the very first night there were two victims on Jersikas Street. They were women, and when they were shot they fell directly onto the barbed wire, since the fence was so close to the narrow sidewalk that one practically had to touch it. After this incident the Committee immediately passed a regulation on travel inside the ghetto. Gaps were made in the fences of all the courtyards so that people could pass through them everywhere. At night our guards would disturb us with a lot of unnecessary shooting.

The Latvian guards wore Latvian military uniforms, and at first they even had the old Latvian insignia on their caps. They wore green armbands, and for this reason we called them *bendeldicke* (armband wearers).

The guards occupied a small yellow wooden house at the ghetto gate, and from the courtyard of this house they had access to the Jewish Committee. The Latvian guards were reinforced by a few German *Wachtmeister* (police patrolmen) from Danzig. These were the real leaders and gave the orders.

In the first few days, the returning work crews entered the ghetto directly through the ghetto gate. Later, so as to monitor us more closely, they made us first go through the guardhouse courtyard. Here we were searched very thoroughly and beaten very cruelly. Many of us will never forget this narrow entrance to the courtyard. There too we had victims to mourn.

After only two days, on 27 October, a Czech Jew was brought from the prefecture, shot immediately in the guardhouse courtyard and buried there. The poor man had gone to the prefecture to find out his future fate, and had been sent directly to the ghetto.

III.

The Committee worked very intensely and meetings were held continually, since there was a great deal to do.

There was no housing for the Jews who had come from the city at the last minute. Some of them even had to be housed in the Committee's rooms. Inspectors (Friedmann etc.) were appointed to monitor housing affairs.

A home for the older people was set up on Ludzas Street, and a second one was set up next to Blech Square. Professor S. Dubnow had also been assigned a room on Ludzas Street.

The Labor Authority was headed by representatives of the Field Commander's office, the Aryans Stanke and Dralle. It too was working at full capacity.

The intermediary was the Jew Goldberg from Rūjiena; he had taken on a very difficult job.

It was decided that the ghetto would receive food only according to its work performance. Now everyone had to work, so that the already reduced rations would not be decreased even more.

A further decree of the Field Commander was that all Jews had to register their valuables, money, movable property and real estate within the country and abroad. Property worth more than 100 DM was confiscated and became the property of the occupying forces. Of course this decree made us seek ways and means to save whatever we could. At night and in the early morning people worked in attics and dug secret hiding places in cellars and within walls. We hardly knew how or where we could hide something most safely. Of course it was easier for those who had a garden or similarly convenient places available to them. In the meantime, Soviet money was exchanged. Ten rubles were now worth one *Ostmark*.

IV.

A Jewish police force was set up, and the Riga jeweler Michael Rosenthal took on the job of leading it. He tried to maintain discipline and acted in a very decent and correct manner. For support he chose some of the intelligent young men, who literally sacrificed themselves for the common good. Of course it happened from time to time that they had to come and get people and put them into work crews, causing dissatisfaction; but after all, this was only done in our own interest, and the well-being and order of the ghetto required these measures.

Besides Police Chief Rosenthal the following comrades were on the police force: Berel, Bag, Wasbutzki, Soloweitschik, Schatzow, Berner, Ginsburg, Landmann, Gutkin and others.

The reader will hear more later on about the German Jew Wand, who was also on the police force. In any case, all of them risked their lives during these difficult times in order to help us. The members of this police force wore uniforms. They wore blue caps with the Star of David.

In the cellars of the Committee the former Saeima deputy and lawyer Wittenberg collected holy objects and other valuable antiques (Talmuds, Torahs and so on). He also founded and headed the Bureau of Statistics.

In one single outpatient clinic, the physician Dr. Josef tried with all his might to alleviate our sufferings. During the ghetto's short lifespan our doctors performed virtually superhuman feats. Because there was no room in the clinic for all the patients, they treated other patients at home, voluntarily and free of charge. One could see Dr. Mintz and Dr. Kostia Feiertag going to visit their patients day and night. And the other doctors were no less committed.

There were plenty of medicines in the Large Ghetto. Every individual had supplies of medicine, and besides, the ghetto did not exist for very long, so the supplies were sufficient.

After the first few weeks it became obvious that the sanitation conditions were catastrophic. The city government refused to pick up any kind of refuse. Thus we were forced to dig huge pits in the courtyards so that garbage and other refuse could be disposed of. The result was that, although it was winter, the air was heavy, bad and polluted. If the ghetto had existed any longer, an epidemic would inevitably have broken out. Probably this was our enemies' ultimate goal!

V.

In the early morning hours, while it was still dark, the work crews had to assemble in Sadovnika Street and some of the side streets. From there they marched, accompanied by the *Kolonnenfuehrer* (leader) of their respective *Kommandos*, to do the tasks assigned to them. The largest *Kommandos*, which I will report on later, were those assigned to the Field Headquarters, the Billeting Department, the Gestapo, HVL, Knights' Hall, the Army Vehicle Park (HKP) and many others.

Besides these *Kommandos*, many people also worked in the ghetto itself. Before the ghetto was closed, a large *Kommando* was sent to Jumpravmuiža to build barracks for the new arrivals (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža).

The intelligentsia among the Jewish women set up a large ghetto laundry, in which people worked very hard. Mrs. Singel, Mrs. Trubek and others worked here under the guidance of the wife of Dr. Eljaschow the lawyer.

Over time, even a Technical Authority was set up. Its first task was an attempt to set up a public bath. In the meantime, the committee was very busy setting up certain training courses. I too submitted a project for training workers to do weaving both by hand and with mechanical looms. I also wanted to set up an adjoining knitting workshop. I proposed that the engineer Ilija Galpern (of the textile factory) be the technical director. Because of the short lifespan of the ghetto, none of these many plans could be implemented.

Among other things, the Jews now had to work as janitors, and people who had formerly played a grand role in society could now be met on the streets holding brooms in their hands. Because of the food distribution system, a great many people had to work in the shops newly opened by the Economic Authority.

Of course those who worked in the work crews outside the ghetto tried to scavenge food for themselves somehow, but it was extremely difficult to smuggle food into the ghetto as they returned.

My son worked in the Kassel construction crew, but only for a very short time. They were renovating a huge building (which was no longer part of the ghetto) on the left side of the ghetto gate. It had been assigned to the guards. This work made it very clear that the liquidation of the ghetto came very suddenly and that nobody had expected it. The Labor Authority had issued a limited number of special yellow working papers to specialists. Some craftsmen who were judged excellent received a special certificate marked "WJ" for *wertvoller Jude* (valuable Jew).

VI.

All too soon, a sad piece of news reached us. About thirty young girls and two young men had been sent to work in Olaine near Riga. After they had done their work, the Latvians took them to a nearby woods, shot them and plundered all their possessions. This incident caused extreme consternation in the ghetto and practically caused a panic. Moreover, on 14 November 1941 three women who had worked in Knights' Hall had been simply taken away and shot on the beach. Their boss, General Jeckeln, had by pure chance walked past the kitchen where they were working and seen that they were smoking. This was enough for him to order their immediate execution. One of these women was the wife of A. Tukazier, who had owned a wine business.

The next day the entire work crew at Knights' Hall was arrested, together with the *Oberjude* (head Jew) Folia Sacharow. For about twenty-four hours their fate was completely uncertain, but then they were released.

Every day news came from the work stations about people being arrested or taken away. For example Gorew-Kalmanowitsch, the former technical director of the *Frühmorgen* (Early Morning) and *Segodnia* (Today) newspapers, was arrested at his place of work in the furniture *Kommando* on Gogol Street. It was said that this arrest had been ordered by a former errand boy at "*Segodnia*", Danilow-Milkowski, who was then working for the Gestapo. All of us Jews knew him only too well. He ordered Gorew to explain to him exactly

where he had hidden his possessions. He was told the addresses of various Aryans and went to them immediately, but nobody handed anything at all over to him. He did not attain his goal until he went to these people again, this time together with Gorew. Although he had promised to release Gorew, Danilow had him taken to prison, where he was shot.

There were also suicides. For example, Mrs. Hanna Maisel poisoned herself, her two daughters Minna and Rasik, and her small four-month-old grandson.

VII.

Now people slowly grew accustomed to life in the ghetto, and in spite of all the difficulties they did not give up their hope for better times.

The Committee also dealt with the question of schooling. Some teachers from the Sabiedriskā college preparatory school were already teaching small groups in the Committee's building. In the meantime, the issue of heating became especially urgent during the harsh winter of 1941. If the ghetto had not been liquidated so soon, this would certainly have led to a catastrophe.

To cover various expenses, the Committee levied a tax. An extraordinarily large amount of money was collected, but it was confiscated by the Gestapo even before the ghetto was liquidated.

Later on, many people said that the Committee had certainly made mistakes, because with such a large sum of money they ought to have managed to annul the *gzeire*, or command to liquidate the ghetto.

There were no houses of prayer in the ghetto. People prayed in the private quarters of Rabbi Sack and at various other places (Abrahamsohn, Katoļu Street).

There were also several attacks in the ghetto. For example, on the first Friday night we received a "visit" in our house at 2 Mazā Kalna Street. Drunken Latvians and members of the German *Wehrmacht* (army) had climbed over the ghetto fence. They robbed and beat us. Because our police force was completely unarmed, their intervention did no good whatsoever. Of course the people in the building were extremely agitated. Because the front door was locked, the attackers broke a window and climbed in through it. They brutally assaulted the defenseless women. Later, a rumor arose that German deserters were hiding in the ghetto.

VIII.

In our small apartment, my wife proved her great skill as a housewife and arranged everything as comfortably as possible with the few belongings we had

left. Food was distributed in very small amounts, and people began to hoard it for future consumption. Already even potato peelings were being used in various dishes, and the new "ghetto specialty", liver paste made from yeast, could be found everywhere.

In their free time our friends and acquaintances often gathered in our room. Because some of the men were already missing, most of the time there were more women. All the important current affairs were aired. Among the people who came - all of them later died, unfortunately - were Mrs. Pola Galpern, Zila and Roma Pinnes, the lawyer Juli Berger, (Prince) Rabinowitsch, Moritz Lange and his wife Beate, Simon Jakobsohn, Mrs. Chaikewitsch, Dr. Prisman's wife and others. Many good acquaintances of ours also lived nearby (Mrs. Mila Jakobsohn, Dina Genina, Dolgitzer and others).



A sign in German and Latvian forbidding unauthorized entrance into the [Riga] ghetto (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives # 28041A)

On the last Saturday before the ghetto was liquidated, my comrade Folia Sacharow invited my wife and me to his mother's room for a *tscholent* (Saturday dinner) with all the *pitschewkes* (trimmings). A large company had come together (Police Chief Rosenthal, the Ritow brothers, Mrs. Seligsohn, Abraham Laser and others). Except for Ritow and me, not one of these people is still alive today. My wife and I often visited the ghetto representative, the lawyer

Eljaschow, in Sadovnika Street. During the very last week of the ghetto, this great pessimist was looking at the future with a bit more hope. The reason he gave for this optimism was some conversations he had had with the authorities.

All of these hopes and suppositions were wiped out by the arrival of Minister Rosenberg, because he ordered the ghetto to be liquidated.* At this time there were more than 32,000 men, women and children in the ghetto. The Large Ghetto had lasted for exactly thirty-seven days.

The Liquidation of the Large Riga Ghetto (The Ten Bloodiest Days) 30 November – 9 December 1941)

*Stiler, stiler lomir schwaigen
Kworim waksen do
Es hoben sei farflanzt die Sonim
Grinen, sei zum blo.*

*Es firn wegn, zu Ponar
Un kein weg zurik
Es iz awek ahin der Tate
Un mit im dos glik.*

*(Let us stand and be quiet, quiet
Graves are growing here
They were planted by our enemies
Green has turned to blue.*

*Roads lead to Ponar
There is no way back
My father went down that road
And with him went happiness.)*

(A song from the Vilno ghetto.)

With an aching heart I now begin the chapter on the ten bloody days.

* [Ed.: The order actually came from Reinhard Heydrich, who, in turn, had received it from Himmler. As early as October, German "specialists" had visited Riga, looking for the best way to liquidate the Latvian Jews, as well as those expected to arrive from the Reich.]

Although these events took place six years ago, they are as firmly fixed in my memory as though they had happened only yesterday. And they will remain just as unforgettable for everyone who survived them.

Even today it is incomprehensible to me that *Boira-Oilom* (God) could sit on his *kisei-hakowed* (throne of honor) and look down upon our great catastrophe. Why didn't the earth open up and swallow the murderers of our precious family members?

Why didn't the sun grow dark when it saw the mass murder of our beautiful, pure, innocent Jewish children?

The ten bloody days and other similar events will remain an indelible mark of shame not only for the people that claims world culture for itself, but also for the Latvian people.

The world had never before experienced the sadism and the animalistic instincts which came to light at that time.

And today all of these murderers dare to demand "just treatment" and "recognition"!

Unfortunately, humankind is only too ready to forget - but we Jews can never and will never forget!

I.

On 27 November 1941, a Thursday morning, a large printed announcement was put up in Sadovnika Street in the ghetto: "The ghetto will be liquidated and its inmates will be evacuated. On Saturday, 29 November, all inmates must line up in closed columns of one thousand persons each. The first ones to go will be the inhabitants of the streets near the ghetto gate (Sadovnika, Katoļu, Lāčplēša, part of Maskavas Street and others)."

The announcement included various further regulations which I can no longer remember today. The decree hit the ghetto like a bolt of lightning, and total chaos broke out. Sadovnika Street was swarming with people, and the work crews that had been standing there were not let outside until later on.

People stood stunned before the momentous announcement and kept trying to puzzle out the meaning of the words "liquidated" and "evacuated". Nobody could imagine that behind these two terms something dangerous and catastrophic was concealed. It was decided that Viļānu Street and half of Līksnas Street had to be emptied of their inhabitants by the evening of 28 November. All the inhabitants of this block were driven into the interior of the ghetto. Work on the new fence around the diminished ghetto was begun immediately. The two streets looked as though a pogrom had taken place there. They were

strewn with belongings that had been thrown out, and feathers from burst bedding were flying around everywhere. There was only one topic of conversation: the evacuation and preparations for the journey.

The larger *Kommandos* were told they had the possibility of staying in the newly formed small camp and rejoining their families later.

Three hundred women were registered as seamstresses and sent "to work" at the Terminal Prison.

II.

I now conferred with my wife and my older brother about what I ought to do. We decided that I should go to the *Kasernierung** so that I could later have the possibility of helping my family through my connections with the outside.

My son was to remain with my wife to give her support. On Friday evening I went once more with my wife to Dr. Eljaschow. In his room we met many acquaintances. I told him of my decision, and he also thought it was good. Of course nobody really knew the right thing to do.

I spent the last evening with my family at home. My wife made supper using the best food supplies we still had, and we talked till late that night. We agreed that if we should be torn apart, each of us would send his address in a letter to the Abe Siew family in Palestine immediately after the war.

We didn't sleep all night, and in the early morning hours I went one more time to my many relatives to bid them farewell, as though I already suspected I would never see any of them again. I had to go to work, and I now said farewell to my wife and my son. For a long, long time we stood there, our eyes filled with tears. My dear wife tried to comfort me by saying repeatedly that we would certainly meet again soon.

I went to work, and my son accompanied me for a short distance.

III.

Very early on Saturday morning, 29 November 1941, the columns of people to be resettled assembled on Sadovnika Street.

Our *Kommandos*, which were also standing there, did not know for a long time whether they would be let out at all.

The first resettlement column had to stand next to the ghetto gate. Its leader was Dr. Eljaschow. He was wearing his elegant black fur coat with a blue-and-white armband. The expression on his face showed no disquiet whatsoever; on

* [Ed.: *Kasernierung* – satellite camp located outside the ghetto.]

the contrary, because everyone was looking at him he made an effort to smile hopefully. At his side one could see Rabbi Sack, who was somewhat shorter. Many well-known citizens of Riga were in the columns, for example old Wolschonok with his blind brother, Lewstein the banker, and many other prominent figures from our midst.

SA members in their brown uniforms kept arriving continually; among them were Altmeyer and Jäger. The Latvian murderer Cukurs got out of a car wearing a leather coat, with a large pistol (Nagan) at his side. He went to the Latvian guards to give them various instructions. He had certainly been informed in detail about the great catastrophe that awaited us. The guards had been strongly reinforced, and large amounts of *schnaps* (liquor) had been delivered to them.

After long conferences, the *Kommandos* were sent to their work stations, but the resettlement columns were ordered to go home. Of course this order caused tremendous joy in the ghetto, and people were already saying that the whole evacuation had been cancelled.

In the meantime, at our place of work we were full of anxiety. So we sent a soldier to the ghetto to find out what was going on. He returned with reassuring news. Nonetheless we tried to get permission to go home earlier, as an exceptional favor. At three that afternoon we got back to the ghetto. We stood at the large gate, but we were no longer allowed to go in. Accompanied by the Latvian guards, we were taken to our new satellite camp.

As we walked past the ghetto fence we saw that the ghetto was in an uproar. I saw many acquaintances, whom I greeted from afar.

The satellite camp was already full of people who had arrived from the ghetto in the course of the day. One of them was my son with his baggage.

My wife had not wanted to leave me alone. At that moment I was not at all happy about this new solution, for I had wanted my wife to have him with her for support. I looked for an opportunity to discuss the matter with her once more.

...A ruined building in Viļānu Street was assigned to our work crew as our shelter.

We started to settle in anew.

IV.

Habeit min haschomaim urej!

Kuk arop fun himel un zeh

Wi dajne kinder schlogt man.

*Wi dajne kinder ploegt man
Man macht fun zeï a teil!!*

(Look down from heaven and see!
Look down from heaven and see
How they are beating your children
How they are torturing your children,
They are being destroyed!)

Suddenly, late that evening the bloody evacuation began. Thousands* of uniformed Latvians and Germans, all of them absolutely drunk, streamed into the ghetto and began to literally hunt down the Jews! It was a hunt to the death! Like wild animals they broke into the Jewish apartments and searched everywhere, from the cellars to the attics.

People tried to hide, but these "wild beasts" dragged and tore everyone away from the most secret hiding places. They beat the people and shot wildly in all directions and drove the defenseless and wounded Jews out of their houses.

They tore children away from their mothers. They grabbed them by the feet and threw the poor little children out of the top-floor windows. Like tigers, the murderers ran from house to house and from room to room.

They ordered people to get dressed as fast as they could and take only the bare essentials with them. Shuddering, mothers looked at their small children whose hands had been broken and who could only moan in pain.

The columns of people were driven from one side toward Sadovnika Street, and from there they were forced to march toward Maskavas Street. From the other side, the commandos were also moving toward Maskavas Street down Ludzas and Lauvas Streets.

The columns of people were closely surrounded by Latvians, but each column was led by a German. Mounted policemen were also present. The large blue city buses were used to transport sick and weak people. They took people out of the Linas Hazedek hospital and the shelter on Ludzas Street. These vehicles drove back and forth all night and all morning.

The ten Jewish drivers of the ghetto were also mobilized to transport the sick people. Only one of them, the driver Sjamka, was lucky enough to come back. He too reported ghastly and nearly inconceivable events.

* [Ed.: Between 100 and 150.]

All the vehicles and columns of people moved down Maskavas Street toward the big Kvadrāts rubber factory. This was during the night of 29 November 1941, the tenth day of the month of Kislev.

A bloody night, a bloody morning!

Blood flowed in the streets, and in every street lay people who had been shot dead.

Blood, blood everywhere!

Everyone was driven forward toward Salaspils. There, at the Rumbula station near the forest, the Germans had already prepared graves. It was said that Russian prisoners of war had been forced to dig these graves.

Men, women and children were ordered to strip naked in the bitter frost. They had to stand this way for a long time. They were beaten terribly, their gold teeth were pulled out, and finally they were pushed to the edge of the graves to be shot. Many women fainted from fright before they were killed. Small children were thrown alive into the graves.

Many who were merely wounded threw themselves voluntarily between the dead in the open graves in order to die with them. Women and men embraced in farewell in the face of death. The luckless ones stood there in their thousands and had to wait their turn, watching their brothers and sisters being shot.

Vehicle followed vehicle. When one was empty, the next one arrived. The adults' hair literally stood on end, and the children were stiff with horror.

The religious Jews said their *vide* (prayers) before the *schchite* (slaughter).

Quietly and calmly they said a prayer to God: "*Eil rachum wchanum!*" (God, have mercy!) and submitted willingly to death.

The earth still heaved for a long time because of the many half-dead people. The Germans had taken over the watch. Did they perhaps fear that the murdered people would rise from their graves?

V.

The bloodbath was ended on Sunday, 30 November. The partial evacuation was stopped, and only the murderers moved through the ghetto, still shooting.

The Jews crept out of their hiding places and whatever holes they had found and looked around them to see whether the Latvian and German gangs were still there.

Ludzas Street in the center of the ghetto was full of murdered people. Their blood flowed in the gutters. In the houses there were also countless people who had been shot. Slowly people began to pick them up.

The lawyer Wittenberg had taken this holy mission upon himself, and he mobilized the remaining young people for this task.

Back and forth drove the hearse, collecting all the corpses and taking them to the Old Jewish Cemetery. Those who were already half-dead were also taken away and died on the way.

Blood flowed like water!

Large common graves were dug in the old Jewish cemetery. Certainly more than a thousand murdered people were buried in each of them, and it was no longer possible to record exactly who was among them.

The Latvians also brought Dr. Freidmann's family to the cemetery. His wife and his child, although they had been shot, were still alive. Only here were they shot dead, and after that Dr. Freidmann himself was forced to bury them.

Bernhardt, the son-in-law of Maikapar (owner of a cigarette factory), was also brought to the cemetery from the city, where he had hidden with his wife and children near Baltezers (White Lake) in Jugla. He had been betrayed by an Aryan woman who was after his property. He and his family were shot. Only he was Jewish, for his wife came from a well-known Karaim family. The same fate overtook Bernhardt's mother and his two sisters.

The Aryans who lived in the surrounding houses cold-bloodedly watched all of these events in the ghetto. Of course the news of our great catastrophe was immediately circulated in the city.

Through this operation, all the inhabitants of Sadovnika Street and all the streets near it (Katoļu, Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Ludzas and Lielā Kalna Street, as well as part of Maskavas Street) had been exterminated.

This bloody night and the following morning had swallowed up more than 15,000 men, women and children!

VI.

On this bloody Sunday as always, we were driven out of our new camp sites to our work stations in the darkness of early morning. Because our camp was in the furthest-back part of the ghetto, we didn't know what had happened in the front part.

Through the fence we saw the columns of people departing; we heard weeping, screaming, and shooting, but we could not find out any details.

Completely distraught and half-dead with fear for our family members, we began to work. My son came to work with me. To gain certainty and reassurance, we exploited our acquaintance with German soldiers and sent some of them to the ghetto to have a look. Not even these soldiers were let in; they

only told us about many horrible things they had seen from a distance. Now we tried at least to gain permission to leave work as soon as possible. Finally, at 2 p.m., this permission was granted.

We reached the ghetto gate at Sadovnika Street. From afar we noticed that the place looked deserted. Countless things lay scattered in the streets. Our *Kommando* was halted and we were ordered to pick up everything that was lying around the gate and to bring it in. We carried all of these things into the large, recently renovated building that had been prepared for the ghetto guards.

In the course of our work we discovered in one package, wrapped in rags, a four-week-old child. It lay there perfectly calm and quiet and had probably been torn from its mother by one of these murderers. Even today I still see the baby's shining eyes before me. The Latvian who was guarding us took the child with him, and certainly it suffered only too soon the same fate as all the other Jewish children.

When we returned to our camp, we found many new people who had managed with the greatest difficulty to reach safety there that morning. A Latvian guard and some officers of our Jewish police force were standing by the passage that led from our camp to the ghetto.

All those who tried to reach safety in our camp received extraordinary support from the Jewish policeman Wand. He helped wherever and however he could, and because of the great credit he thus earned we forgave him later on for many a mistake he had made.

VII.

Many of us, including me, tried to make some kind of contact with our people in the ghetto, which was very difficult. In any case we had by then found out what had happened there.

Some members of our *Kommando* were also deployed to bury the murdered people. In the meantime, my son had managed to get into the ghetto. He returned very soon with an unspeakably sad piece of news for me. My wife had been one of the victims of the great catastrophe that had hit all of us.

Now people told me the following story: in order to bring a few things to us men in the new camp, my wife had left the house early in the morning in the company of her friends Mrs. Trubek and Mrs. Abram and her neighbour Mrs. Schneier. At the corner of Ludzas and Līksnas Streets they came upon a column of people that was passing by and were pulled along with it. But others

reported that the guards had taken the things away from the women and shot them on the spot.

When I heard this dreadful news I fainted; it took me a long time to regain consciousness. Weeping, my poor boy comforted me. Despite his youth he already understood that we had lost not only a wife and mother but also the best comrade of our lives. In her, a very refined, exceptionally decent, and unusually intelligent and clever human being had left us. Through her outstanding character she had set an example for everyone.

For a long time I simply could not believe she was dead; I was convinced, as was everyone else who shared the same fate with me, that our loved ones had been evacuated.

VIII.

The next morning we had to go to work again. At work we tried to make contacts so as to find out more details about the "evacuation". Not only from our work crew but also from various other places, the Jews began to send *schiluchim* (messengers) to find out the whereabouts of the "evacuated" people.

An Aryan woman who visited me assured me that all of them were in a camp in Salaspils. The ghetto inhabitants who still remained were also taken there. A comrade from our work crew named Buwitsch looked for the "evacuated" people, together with our gendarmes from the field headquarters, near the Kvadrāts factory. From him we also heard that many Jews had been seen in Jumpravmuiža – men, women and children. Because nobody was allowed to go near them, once again nothing definite could be found out. Later it turned out that Jews, but only German Jews, had been brought there (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža).

In the meantime, it had become somewhat easier to go back and forth between the ghetto and our camp. I myself met Grischa Minsker and his wife (Chaikewitsch) of the Jewish Council in the camp; however, they returned to the ghetto only a short time later.

The greatest calm now reigned in the ghetto, and we could move back and forth without hindrance. Everyone was preparing for the resettlement that was scheduled for Monday, December 8. Nobody could believe that anything so horrible could really have happened to the first columns of evacuees; if it had, we would surely have heard about some kind of resistance on their part. So all of us sent along our greetings to those who had already been resettled.

I went to say my farewells to the few relatives and acquaintances of mine who were in the ghetto.



Max Kaufmann's wife, Franka

My wife's friends received me with tears in their eyes, for they knew she had been murdered in the ghetto. At their place I met Mrs. Eva Lewenstein, Mrs. Blumstein, Roma and Zila Pinnes, Mrs. Raja Lulow (her husband George had

been arrested and then murdered) and Mrs. L. Misroch. The latter is the only one who is still alive today. I met only the women of the Schatzow (Salmansohn) and Lange families (Moritz Lange had been shot in front of the house he lived in). Of my own family I found only my sister, Mrs. Rebekka Hurwitsch, with her children. Her son worked together with me and later died in Buchenwald. I also visited Mrs. Kaplan (Garabetow), who was then seriously ill, Mrs. Singel and Mrs. Stern.

Many of us went to the ghetto to bring things back from there. But I no longer wanted to cross the threshold of my apartment there. I gave up everything, for I could not look again at the room which my dearly beloved wife had left forever.

By this time my neighbor Borkon (a lawyer from Daugavpils) had also died.

IX.

The second evacuation began on Monday, 8 December 1941 (the eighteenth day of the month of Kislev). The same procedure was followed as in the first one, only it was somewhat calmer and there were fewer victims. Once again the blue buses drove back and forth, and the columns of people marched in the same direction. A German marched at the head of each column, but otherwise these processions of misery were surrounded by Latvians on foot and on horseback. If anyone fell behind while marching, he was beaten with truncheons and shot. These beasts had evidently still not been sated by the blood that had flowed the previous week.

On these days too I went to work with my son.

At the work site I organized an expedition that was to find out in which direction the columns of people were marching. Together with the driver Becker from the headquarters, whom I paid well for this, I put together a work group to gather wood. In a truck we drove through Salaspils toward Ogre. As we approached the Kvadrāts factory we encountered the first evacuees. We slowed down. They were walking quite calmly, and hardly a sound was heard. The first person in the procession we met was Mrs. Pola Schmuljan (wife of the wholesale lumber dealer and sister of Mrs. Baruchsohn). Her head was deeply bowed and she seemed to be in despair. I also saw other acquaintances of mine among the people marching; the Latvians would occasionally beat one or another of them with their truncheons.

From afar I also saw two other columns, which were drawing closer to the Rumbula railway station. There they halted. In this way, the organizers wanted to create the impression that from there they would be transported to points

further on. But in reality they were herded in groups into the forest and slaughtered.

On the way I counted six murdered people who were lying with their faces in the snow.

The murderers showed their "compassion" for the bitterly weeping small children by stopping some of the sledges, emptying them, and roughly throwing the children into them. I can still hear their thin, weeping little voices today!

We drove on.

At the edge of the road, hidden by a small wood, stood two trucks and between sixty and eighty soldiers. They were soldiers of the German *Wehrmacht*. Only a short distance past the wood we saw machine guns set close together in the snow. As far as I could judge, they reached from Rumbula to the banks of the Daugava River, about three kilometers away.

When I saw this, I instantly realized that a great catastrophe would occur here.

However, our driver, Becker, explained as a professional military man that these were merely preventive measures to keep people from escaping. But I held on to my suspicion, which was later confirmed.

Everything I had seen proved beyond a doubt that the German *Wehrmacht* was deeply involved in these mass murders.

We drove on, in order to examine the whole route. Next to the church in Salaspils stood a large camp, but it was for Russian prisoners of war. They told us they knew nothing at all about the Jews.

On the way back we chose another route. When we returned with all of these news to our comrades at the field headquarters, they were of course overcome by dread.

In the meantime, the ghetto bled on. The resettlement claimed new victims, and again the *action* lasted a whole day, for that was how long the German and Latvian gangs rampaged through the camp, looting and murdering.

Before this barbarism was over, a large number of people managed to reach safety in a house at 66 Ludzas Street and in another corner of Līksnas Street (which was later an outpatient clinic). How and why their efforts succeeded is a riddle to me even today. The group mostly consisted of women and children.

We finally saved a group of about one hundred people that same evening by bringing them into the cellar of the field headquarters. Among them were Mrs. Kamenkowitsch with her boys, my sister-in-law (B. Kaufmann) with her daughter, Mrs. Dworkin, the large Pukin family, and others.

After we had happily settled all of them in, we held a short religious service and said *Kaddish* (the prayer for the dead).

According to later reports, the liquidation in Rumbula proceeded in exactly the same way as the previous *action*.

As I have already mentioned, the columns of people were delivered to the railway station in order to keep up the illusion, and from there they were taken in groups at night to the graves that had already been prepared for them.

Once again they were forced to strip naked, then pushed into the graves and shot. Every individual piece of clothing had to be put in a specially designated place. This fact shows the cold-bloodedness and precision with which our murderers went about their business.

Whether men or women, all were overtaken by the same fate! Even the small children were shot in groups and thrown into the graves, some still half-alive.

This *action* cost us about 11,500 people. Only three women managed to escape from these two bloodbaths.

X.

On Tuesday, 9 December 1941, the ghetto experienced the tenth bloody day.

As usual, all the *Kommandos* left the new camp in the very early morning to go to work.

And now the same cruel game began anew. At nine o'clock Germans and Latvians, led by SA men, stormed into the camp. There was a second rounding-up of the Jews. Once again the Jews tried to hide in attics and cellars, once again the beasts searched through hiding place after hiding place, shot, looted, and pushed everyone they found into the blue buses that were standing ready. Once again they drove back and forth continually, this time not toward Rumbula but toward the Biķernieki forest. There the same kind of mass murder was perpetrated.

Our satellite camp was not spared further murders either, and thus our new shelter again was baptized by Jewish blood.

When Dr. Kretzer, who lived in Viļānu Street, saw all of our misery, he tried to commit suicide, but he was saved.

Shortly before twelve o'clock, just as a new column was to be sent to be exterminated, the SA man Jäger showed up among the murderers. He pulled out his watch and announced, "You're in luck! It is now one minute past twelve. The *action* is over."

That is how monstrously cynical the SA people were then, and in the great trial that is now going on in Nuremberg they denied having participated in any way in the bestial actions of those days.

That bloody Tuesday had claimed about five hundred victims.

During the bloody ten days we lost more than 27,000 people – men, women and children!

The Small Riga Ghetto (Kasernierung - Satellite Camp) and the Reichs-Juden-Ghetto (Reich Jewish Ghetto) (1 December 1941 – 2 November 1943)

I.

After the liquidation of the large ghetto, first our satellite camp, which became the so-called Small Ghetto was set up. Its administration was taken over by Kölmann, a well-known figure in Riga. At the head of the Jewish police force was the German Jew Wand, who was also a member of the ghetto administration. To supplement the few policemen remaining from the Large Ghetto, others were recruited now for police duty, for example the engineer Hofschowitsch and Isaak Berner, both of whom held important positions. A large building in Līksnas Street was chosen to be the official building that housed the offices of all the authorities.

The registration carried out right at the beginning revealed that there were about 4,500 people in this ghetto. In addition there was a small number of people in satellite camps in the city of Riga, plus those who had been assigned to work outside the city cutting peat, and finally a few hundred women in the Terminal Prison who were to be released.

The Bureau of Statistics, the address file, and the *chevro-kadischo* (burial society) were managed by the lawyer Wittenberg.

A special ghetto was established for the women who were still alive and those who were returning from the prisons. The children were also quartered there. The women's ghetto consisted of a complex of houses at 68 – 70 Ludzas Steet and on Līksnas Street. It was said that ninety of the so-called seamstresses (many women had registered as members of this profession) were missing when the group came back from the Terminal Prison.

The Economic Authority also took up its activities again. First one shop and then several more were opened. We received food from the area commissary,

which was in fact our "host". The wages we were supposed to receive from our employers were paid to the area commissary.

The Labor Authority was set up at 72 Ludzas Street. Its head at that time was the German Stanke, who had also personally taken part in the liquidation of the Large Ghetto. He was assisted by the Latvian Dralle, whose name will certainly be known to many Riga Jews who used to patronize the Jewish Club. Dralle's father had been employed there for a long time as a waiter.

Incidentally, now that I am on the subject of the Riga club, I do not want to miss this opportunity to commemorate my good friend Leo Woloschinski. He was the club's business manager and died a horrible death in July 1941.

The aforementioned Dralle often beat and tortured us. The Jewish leader at the Labor Authority was a certain Kassel, and he had an assistant named Maisel (formerly an employee of Louis Thal). The office manager was Mrs. Wischnewska. Later on we received work booklets, which also served as passes. These booklets bore the inscription "Jew" in large letters. The employer had to record in them the hours we had worked.

The outside guard duty was in Latvian hands, but inside the ghetto there was also a special company of guards (at 66 Ludzas Street). It consisted of German policemen from Danzig. Initially the chief of this group was the German police officer Hesfer. Besides him, the murderers Tuchel, Neumann, Kobello, Karasik and others remain unforgettable to us, for all of them had countless human lives on their conscience. The reader will hear more details about them soon.

II.

In the beginning, the living conditions in the Small Ghetto were appalling. Between ten and fifteen people had to live in one small room. They had to sleep on the floor, and in addition there was the cold, which we felt very intensely. Because of the unhygienic conditions all kinds of illnesses due to uncleanness naturally spread. The situation in the women's ghetto was exactly the same.

The men's opportunities to visit the women's ghetto were limited; they had to have special permits to do so. The entrance to the women's ghetto was guarded initially by Jewish policemen and then by women. At this time the mood was extraordinarily depressed, for people had lost all trust that they would be safe in the ghetto, and they began to consider how they could manage to be transferred to satellite camps in the city. This plotting became a virtual obsession! (see the chapter "Satellite Camps – Small Concentration Camps"). This obsession led to attempts to escape from the ghetto and from the work sites. Among those who escaped were Tewje Gurewitsch and his son

and Herz Bersin (of the Bersin brothers' family). Pretty Mrs. Dworkin (of Liepāja) also disappeared from my work site at the field headquarters; unfortunately, she was later caught and shot.

After many people had managed to be transferred to satellite camps in the city, the living conditions improved. The newly created Billeting Department was headed by Brandt and Margolin.

We went to work while it was still dark and came back in the late evening. No matter how hard the work was, we were still afraid every time to return to the ghetto. At the work sites, people were still busy trying to find out whether the liquidation of the Large Ghetto had really been a resettlement or not. *Schiluchim* (messengers) were sent back and forth.

The Jews who worked at the Gestapo headquarters often came across clothes that had been delivered there marked with the Jewish star. There were also many old Latvian passes that had belonged to Jews. Through Aryans we knew, very sad news reached us from the city. All of this implied that there was something suspicious about the "resettlement".

A rumor arose in the ghetto that a card from the artist Rachel Raschina* had come by post from Daugavpils, saying that the resettled Jews would be sent further on. Unfortunately, this was not the truth.

And so in the course of time we were forced to realize that we had really lost our loved ones forever! But we didn't believe it yet, because we simply didn't want to believe it.

Later, one of the three women who had saved themselves returned to the ghetto; it was Mrs. Hamburger. She said she had been only wounded but had lain in one of the graves nonetheless. In the night she had climbed out, hidden under the mountains of clothes that were lying around, and risked fleeing at an opportune moment. Unfortunately, she was killed some time later. The second woman went insane, and the third, who was hidden by a minister, is now said to be back in Riga.

In the meantime, the three hundred people in the peat-cutting work crew returned from Sloka. They had not heard anything about the liquidation of the ghetto or the mass murders connected with it.

III.

The Latvian guards lived in the Large Ghetto, which was now completely deserted. They looted whatever they could for themselves. Actually they were

* [Ed.: It is assumed that the author meant the noted violinist Sarah Raschina.]

still stationed there in order to protect the large amount of Jewish property that remained. The Latvian Danskop, one of these guards, was known far and wide for his acts of murder and his unparalleled sadism.

A special commando was assembled for the work of clearing out the Large Ghetto. No Jew was allowed to take even the smallest thing there for himself. The head of this commando was Aismann, a Jew from Daugavpils, whom the murderers especially trusted. He kept excellent watch over his workers and appealed to them for God's sake not to take anything for themselves.

Of course we tried repeatedly to get back into the empty large ghetto from our small ghetto, so as to get back some of our belongings or things we had hidden. These efforts claimed victims every day. Danskop, Hesfer and Tuchel had an especially large number of human beings on their conscience; for them, a Jewish life was worthless.

In order to curry favor with the authorities, Aismann did not hesitate to do any evil deed. He even went so far as to betray Jewish hiding places. He also engaged in various other evil actions. We regarded him as a traitor and were very afraid of him. Thank God that his fate overtook him soon. Tuchel ordered him to come to the Old Jewish Cemetery to discuss a matter involving gold, and shot him there. His death brought us only joy; if this murder had not taken place we would certainly have killed him ourselves.

All of the things taken from the Jewish houses were sorted and prepared for sale to the Latvian population. Even German units went to the ghetto to get what they needed. Our field headquarters also sent trucks several times to fetch furniture and other useful items. I know that even the general in charge of the field headquarters, Dr. Bamberg, took some of these things for himself and sent them to Germany.

I do not doubt for a second that many Jewish valuables still lie buried today in the earth of the former Large Ghetto. But nobody knows about them.

Only too often, when someone tried to dig up the things he had hidden he found things that had been buried by someone else. Looking for *malines* (hiding places) became a virtual mania.

IV.

In the early morning of Saturday, 13* December 1941, the first transports of German Jews to the ghetto arrived at the Šķirotava station. Jews had already arrived on 3 December,** but they had been sent on to Jumpravmuiža (see the

* [Ed.: December 10, 1941.]

** [Ed.: 12/3; 12/4; 12/7; 12/8.]

chapter on Jumpravmuiža). The first transport to the ghetto was from Cologne. All of these unfortunate people still had elegant luggage, which they had been allowed to take along. But in Riga they were told at once that they didn't need to worry about their bags any longer because they would be delivered to them directly in the ghetto. Every piece of luggage bore in colored script the name of its owner, the evacuation number, and the city from which it had come. "Isaac"* had been added to the men's names, "Sarah" to the women's. The suitcases and boxes, which their owners were now waiting for in the ghetto, never arrived, for they were delivered directly to the Gestapo (see the chapter on the Gestapo satellite camps).

The Jews reached the ghetto that same afternoon. There was severe frost, and we were just coming back from our work sites. Men, women and children arrived.

In a state of complete collapse, with their faces protected from the cold with scarves, in columns and rows of five, without luggage or carrying a handbag at most, they made their entrance.

They were assigned a part of the Large Ghetto. The guards who accompanied them were Gestapo people wearing skull insignia.

In the course of a month, transports of Jews came from Vienna, Hanover, Bielefeld and Hamburg;** combined transports came from Bavaria and Saxony. Czech Jews who had previously been in Theresienstadt arrived from Prague.***

Among the new arrivals there were even some Aryan women who were married to Jews and did not want to part from their husbands and children.

I can no longer remember how many people were brought in, but I estimate that it was between 15,000 and 18,000.**** In every one of them you could see the difficult years they had just lived through. Among them were many pretty young women.

When they arrived in the ghetto they were lucky, because they were assigned the apartments and things left behind by our "resettled" people. This was a great help to them. During the first few days they received no rations at all, so they had to live on the supplies they could still find in the apartments.

* [Ed.: Name to be added for Jewish males was "Israel".]

** [Ed.: The entire Hamburg transport went to Jungfernhof, and so did the Bavarian transport and the one from Stuttgart. The "Saxony" transport came from Leipzig. There were also transports from Kassel, Berlin, Dortmund, Duesseldorf, Bielefeld, Hanover, and Vienna.]

*** [Ed.: The Czech Jews, originally from Prague and Bruenn, came directly from Theresienstadt.]

**** [Ed.: To the ghetto - 14,593; to Jungfernhof - 4,464; to Rumbula - 1,000; Total - 20,057.]

When we went to work in the morning, the children were already standing by the fence and calling out to the work crews that were marching past them: "Uncle, bread, bread!" They whined and wept. Even though we ourselves were very short of bread, we still gave them our last remaining pieces. Then we scavenged bread at our work stations, and in the evenings we brought it with us to the waiting children. Our commando (at the field headquarters) collected and gave an especially large amount.

At this point I recall my comrade Lewinsohn, who did an extraordinary amount for the children although he had two children of his own. It was fairly difficult to get the bread over the fence, and sometimes it even cost lives; for if the guards saw us, we were chased, beaten and even shot at.

The German Jews were under the command of the Gestapo. After their arrival the ghetto swarmed with Gestapo people.

Our Small Ghetto was separated from the larger one by barbed wire, and officially there was no connection of any kind between the two.

V.

In time, the German Jews began to organize themselves. Each group had its elder. The Cologne group was headed by Leiser, the Prague group by Steuer, the group from Hanover and Vienna by Fleischel, and so on. Leiser was also the chief elder of the Jewish Council in the Reich ghetto and kept this post until the liquidation. In contrast to us, the German Jews wore only one star, inscribed "Jew", on their chests.

Because they didn't want to twist their tongues around the difficult Latvian street names, they renamed the streets. The ghetto was now German and was going to have German names. Of course they could not rename one street Adolf-Hitler-Strasse and another Hermann-Göring-Strasse as the city of Riga had done, so they renamed the streets after their groups' cities of origin. Ludzas Street became Leipziger Strasse, and others became Kölner Strasse, Wiener Strasse* and so on. The only street that kept its name was Maskavas Street. It was not used at all any more, because the posts of the barbed-wire fence stood directly next to the houses.

The passageway to Ludzas Street was called the Prager Tor (Prague Gate). Whole housing complexes were also renamed: Sachsenhaus, Pragerhaus and so on. A small house was named Jägerhaus, or Hunting Lodge.

* [Ed.: This street was called Berliner Strasse. On one side lived the Jews from Berlin, on the other the Viennese. There was no Wiener Strasse.]

The German Gestapo set up a ghetto command headquarters at 56 Ludzas Street. A German Jewish police force was also created. Its chief was the German Jew Frankenberg.* This police force still tried to advocate the view that "the law is the law", which under the circumstances was quite useless. By contrast, our Jewish police force only tried to exploit all the regulations to our advantage.

Each group had its own administration, supply system, and a section of the labor authority. The central labour authority, however, was responsible both for the German Jews and for us; but the Germans had an extra representative on it, a man from Cologne named Schultz.

At the end of December, the "man-eater" Krause became the commandant of both ghettos. We found out that before the war he had been a police detective in Berlin.** The Gestapo man Max Gymnich from Cologne was appointed as his functionary and assistant.*** These two murderers acquired a large and dangerous dog to lend them support.

A prison for inmates from both ghettos was set up in the area where the Hanover group was quartered. When it became too full, an annex was set up in the courtyard of the command headquarters. All too many of us got to know this prison. The smallest misstep, even a suspicion, was enough to land one in it. Once there, many people disappeared forever.

VI.

In the beginning the German Jews did not yet have to work outside the ghetto; instead, they were assigned to clear out the apartments of the people who had been "evacuated". Women also worked at the delousing stations under the supervision of the Gestapo man Buchholz.****

The German Jews were given their first rude surprise by the Latvian Danskop. He shot eighteen young girls whom he unjustly suspected of having stolen things from Jewish houses. Of course this incident caused the greatest consternation in the German ghetto.

* [Ed.: He was a figure head. The real police chief of the German ghetto was Rudolf Haar.]

** [Ed.: Not in Berlin, but in Breslau.]

*** [Ed. Gymnich functioned as Krause's chauffeur.]

**** [Ed.: The German Jews went to work outside one day after arrival in the ghetto! There was, at that time, no delousing station, but a clothing depot with clothes to be fixed for later use of German Jews. Since they never received their luggage, they could ask for and got replacements for their worn out clothes and shoes.]

The first outside work crews* consisted of women who came into the city to shovel snow. There had just been heavy snowfalls, so hundreds of pretty Jewish women, "adorned" with their Jewish stars and wearing only rags on their feet, had to clear away the snow.

In the city center, where I too was working, the German soldiers watched from the windows of the command headquarters how "their women" were being forced to work. A certain expression of dissatisfaction and sympathy could be seen only on the faces of the older men in the units.

These poor, hungry women received bread from us.

In the course of time the German work crews merged with ours, and all of us went together to work outside the ghetto.

Large sewing and knitting stations and technical workshops were set up for the older women and men in the former shelter on Blech Square. Some of the people also worked there for the *Wehrmacht*. Many Jews worked in the ghetto itself.

Whole mountains of old kitchenware, including many samovars, could be seen on Blech Square. These things had been collected for reuse. There was even a ground-floor apartment at 2 Kalna Street whose rooms were full of silver objects, including many *objets d'art* and valuables.

The children in the German ghetto received schooling again as soon as possible; there was no lack of talented teachers. Kindergartens were set up for the smaller ones.

Even in the very crowded ghetto, each person continued his own family life.

VII.

At the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, our mood was quite subdued. America's entry into the war (on 11 December 1941**) and the situation of the Germans outside Leningrad, where they were making absolutely no progress, worsened our situation considerably. It was aggravated by the extraordinarily cold winter (all of the motor vehicles got stuck). It was hard to recall a similar winter, and it weighed heavily on the victors' psyche.

On New Year's Day Hitler made a huge political speech, as he did every year. In his speech he expressed not the slightest doubt about a final victory,

* [Ed.: The German Jews went to work outside one day after arrival in the ghetto! There was, at that time, no delousing station, but a clothing depot with clothes to be fixed for later use of German Jews. Since they never received their luggage, they could ask for and get replacements for their worn out clothes and shoes.]

** [Ed.: December 7, 1941.]

and heaped scorn and mockery on his enemies. He devoted a considerable part of his speech to us, his "bloody enemies".

He said he would wreak a special vengeance on us, who were to blame for this war, and he would make sure that in the future a Jew in Europe would be a rarity. He carried out his plan for us by having the bones of six million Jews ground up in the special machines of highly developed German technology.

Nor were we forgotten by Goebbels, Rosenberg and their cronies. Even the radio reporter Fritsche flung new filth at us almost daily and even threatened us with the sword.

Through these speeches we knew we could not expect much good from now on. Every one of us had to rely on his own attempts to save himself by any means available. Unfortunately, this was practically impossible, because we would have had to depend on help from the native population, but we could not trust them in the least. Because all of us had hidden in their homes things they wanted to possess, all of us feared they would betray us for that reason alone. They were already going so far as to bring poisoned food to the work stations for those who had entrusted their last remaining possessions to them. My Aryans gave me and my son presents of food which we didn't touch, although we were half-dead from hunger.

This was the atmosphere in which the year 1942 began!

VIII.

The long, hard winter of 1942 brought us great hardship. There was a great shortage of fuel. Initially we were still permitted to have a small amount of wood that had been left behind in the Large Ghetto by the "evacuated" people, but this soon ran out. So we had to try to scavenge some fuel at our work stations. Now as we returned from our work crews, most of us carried a piece of wood together with the food he had received or scavenged.

All of us were dressed fairly warmly, for we still owned clothes from the good old days. But one day as we returned through the ghetto gate, all of our winter clothes were simply taken away from us and we had to walk on, only scantily clothed, in the severe frost.

Then a new regulation decreed that all warm clothing, furs and the like had to be handed in. Sabotage meant death! What were we to do? I too still owned a fur coat. But by that time my son had already torn it apart without asking my permission, burned part of it and thrown the rest into the latrine. He said, "I won't give up this fur coat to my mother's murderers, even if I have to pay for

it with my life!" Now we had to walk around freezing miserably for a long time until we had once again scavenged protective clothing for ourselves.

One day as we came home from our work, we found a group of photographers and reporters from Germany at the entrance to the ghetto. They had shown up expressly to get material for illustrated journals. They sought out the ugliest and most ragged people from our ranks and forced them to make grotesque faces besides. Later we saw in a journal the picture of our comrades, captioned: "Typical faces of the Riga ghetto"!

Commandant Krause became more brutal from day to day. He implemented with extreme strictness his decree that bartering was punishable by death. This measure claimed its first victims in the German ghetto. But that did not prevent anyone there from continuing to *filchen*,* as they put it. And in fact if a person wanted to go on living at all, there was no alternative to scrounging or bartering his last remaining possessions.

Smuggling something into the ghetto always involved the greatest danger, because if even the smallest thing was discovered in a body search, the *Kommandant* immediately issued a death sentence. He then carried out this sentence personally by shooting the person at the wall of the Jewish cemetery (see the chapter "*Kworim Weinen*").

Because the Labor Authority was not yet operating at full capacity, Dralle went from apartment to apartment to get people for work crews. Those who had hidden and were found by him were beaten soundly.

The most difficult work crew at that time was the "cable crew". They had to lay cables in the frozen earth. The foremen of that work crew beat us more than the others.

IX.

Because the sanitation conditions were extremely bad, it was decided in mid-January to enlarge our ghetto up to Mazā Kalna Street. Our work group at the field headquarters was quartered in a house of its own at 55 Ludzas Street. It took a fairly long time for us to put it more or less into order. As we cleared it out we found all kinds of valuables left behind by the "evacuated" people.

I too fixed up a small inner room in the house for my son and me. Next door to us lived the sign painter Lewi with his two talented sons and the typewriter dealer and mechanic Abramsohn, who also had his son with him. Later we were joined by Professor Gurwitsch. Nearby a certain Mr. Klein (from Auce),

* [Ed.: The word in the German Ghetto for bartering was "tauschen", and for stealing "organisieren"; "filchen" or "filzen" meant stealing too.]

whom we called *Dziadzia* (Uncle), had set up a shelter for himself and his nephew. At that time Klein was the leader of our work crew. The pharmacist Jeletzki and Dr. Sandler (from Ludza) lived with them.

In the evenings all of us gathered together to discuss the general political situation. I was the radio commentator. Because I worked in the apartment of our *Kommandant*, who was also a senior official of the court martial, I had the opportunity to listen to the radio when nobody noticed. Listening to foreign radio stations was punishable by death. Generally I first allowed myself a stroll to Moscow and then to England, where I listened to the extraordinarily good and clear reports of Lindley Frazer. Of course I didn't miss the broadcasts of the German Fritsche and the speeches of the great German *Führer*.

Because of my reports, they always waited for me impatiently in the cellar of the field headquarters. Once the whole thing nearly went wrong, because I had forgotten to tune the court-martial official's radio back to the German station. Of course he noticed it and reminded me of the punishment that had been decreed for it. I promised to strictly obey the regulations regarding this activity in the future, but of course I did not do so.

It was practically impossible for us Jews to obtain a newspaper. Possessing newspapers and other written material was punished by death. Nonetheless, one or the other of us would occasionally dare to stealthily smuggle printed matter into the ghetto.

Of course the rumors that circulated at the work stations in the *Wehrmacht* quarters and the civilian units reached the ghetto as well and spread through it rapidly. As one can imagine, many fantastic stories were told. We called these fantastic rumors "JWA" news, meaning "the Jews want it that way". Unfortunately, JWA news were often only wishful thinking. As a radio commentator, I could of course tell the difference between what was true and what was false in the JWA news.

Because our enemy's prospects were at that time already diminishing drastically, many false reports circulated.

X.

On 8 February 1942, more than five hundred Jewish men and women arrived in the ghetto from Kovno (Lithuania). They owned practically nothing and wore the Star of David higher up on their backs than we did. They told us a great deal about the huge losses of Lithuanian Jewry, and they also told us that thousands of Jews had been killed in the forts of the castle fortress of Kovno.

The names I noted among them are: Dr. and Mrs. Gerber, Sachar Margolin and his wife, the veterinarian Dr. Siwjanski, the editor J. Kaplan, Dr. Kronsohn, Anja Gerber, S. Klebanow and others. I also met a distant relative of mine, Rabbi Braude (son of the director of the religious school in Slobodka).

There were many expert craftsmen among the new arrivals: shoemakers, tailors and so on. They were quartered in some wooden houses in Ludzas Street and Mazā Kalna Street in the ghetto. The women had to go to the women's ghetto. I still remember vividly a thin blond retarded boy who was among the men and came to a sad end. Once Tachel saw him delousing himself while working, called him, went with him to the cemetery wall and shot him there.

The Kovno Jews showed their capability very soon by being the first ones to begin trading. Shortly after their arrival they were sent to work at an airfield next to the Kvadrāts factory. Although they could not speak the language at all, they nonetheless managed to form trade connections with the Aryans there. The first thing they bought and brought into the ghetto was saccharin. I have to admit that we Latvian Jews were not capable of doing this. In the beginning they went from house to house selling it; but later they sold the things in their rooms, and in time they created a direct market. I will provide further personal details about them later on (see the chapter "Men in Women's Roles").

At first we found this trading very strange; but because we realized very soon that it was useful for our ghetto, we tolerated it.

After the Kovno people had been sent to work alone for some time, they were gradually merged into our groups, so that we all shared the same fate.

Only a few people from this Kovno transport survived.

Although the German Jews seemed alien to us from the first moment on and remained so*, we felt close to the Lithuanian Jews immediately, from the first day to the last.

XI.

As early as January 1942 the command headquarters became very active in the German ghetto.

The first satellite camp for German Jews of about 900 men was set up in Salaspils.** Only strong men were selected for this camp. There they had to

* [Ed.: That may have been true for Kaufmann's generation, but not for the young people.]

** [Ed.: Many more such transports to Salaspils followed. The last one left on May 4, 1942. All in all, nearly 3,000 Jewish men were sent there, of whom 300 came back to the ghetto, in small groups. The last such group came back in August 1942.]

work under very harsh and inhuman conditions. The Gestapo chief Dr. Lange could be seen at least once a week in the new satellite camp. By his own account, he had been a school friend of Horst Wessel. Every time this crafty murderer visited the camp, blood flowed. He punished every small misstep immediately and without further inquiry by shooting the person on the spot. Very many people were also hanged in Salaspils. Executions of this kind were always carried out in the presence of the camp's inmates. The SS man Richard Nickel, who "worked" nearby in Jumpravmuiža, also proved to be a good shot.

The satellite camp ended with the return of sixty to seventy living skeletons to the ghetto in the summer of 1942. All of the others had died and been buried in the woods of Salaspils.

Concerning Salaspils I would also like to mention that since the beginning of the war it had been the site of large prison camps (*stalag*) for Russians. After the prison camps were liquidated, large numbers of Russians with children from the occupied territories were quartered there. All of them died of the cold and starvation.

There was also a forced labor camp in Salaspils for Aryans who had been convicted of either political or ordinary crimes. Our Krause was its commandant for a long time, and there too he made sure that much blood was shed.

A selection for a second satellite camp in Daugavgrīva (Dünamünde) was made in the German ghetto. Only older men and women were selected for this camp; they were told they would work in a canning factory. Each group had to provide a certain number of people. The group leaders did not care if parents were separated from their children or wives from their husbands. Only through the protection of the powerful could a person escape such a fate.

This transfer or action was staged on a day when I was not working. From my window in Ludzas Street I could look right across the street at the courtyard of 25 Ludzas Street, where the people were gathering. It was snowing as these pitiable people arrived there with their few belongings. Refined elderly Jews stood there in rows of ten and waited calmly and quietly for the truck that was supposed to pick them up. Chairs were even brought for those who were unable to stand for a long time. Two large trucks accompanied by Latvian volunteers drove back and forth. The German Jewish policemen kept order and helped people climb into the trucks. The round trip for each truck lasted between thirty and thirty-five minutes, which I measured precisely by my watch. This length of time would never have been enough to reach Daugavgrīva.

Later it became known that the "transfer" to eternity had taken place that very night in the woods of Biķernieki.

The children and relatives who had been left behind believed the whole time in the existence of the factory in Daugavgrīva. The commandant was even so polite as to have it announced that everyone had settled in well at the canning factory and that in the summer they would return to the ghetto.

In this case too, they let the Latvians carry out the extermination. This and many other similar deeds will remain an indelible disgrace for the Latvian people.

In the ghetto, people even talked about a second transfer to the satellite camp in Daugavgrīva, but I didn't know anything about it personally.*

The first transfer had claimed the lives of more than a thousand Jewish men and women.

XII.

When the sorting of the collected property of the Jews "evacuated" from the Large Ghetto was finished, the area command headquarters decided to distribute all of these things for giveaway prices to the Latvian population as a reward for their service.

As we went to work in the gray light of early morning, we saw long lines of Latvian women who had come to shop for blood-soaked Jewish clothing and other things. These shameless people stood in line for hours. The whole bargain sale in the ghetto lasted for months. Thus it is certainly no exaggeration when I say that every Latvian household owns the bloody belongings of Jews.

Nor was the Jewish cemetery left in peace!

Because the space available there was no longer sufficient and the demand for it was very great, it was decided to blow up the old graves (see the chapter "*Kworim Weinen*").

One day an acquaintance, Stanislaw Przedborski, visited me at my work station. He was living in the city with Aryan documents that identified him as Polish, and he told me various news items from there. Among other things, he said that a Polish Jew named Raft, from Warsaw, had been murdered in his

* [Ed.: The two "transfers" occurred on February 5, 1942 and March 15, 1942. The first "*Aktion*" numbered 1100 Jews (700 from the Berlin group and 400 from the Vienna group). The second "*Aktion*" contained members of every one of the German groups (with most of them from Berlin), totaling almost 3,000 Jews, mainly old, ill, or children. After that second "*Aktion*", the victim's belongings were brought into the ghetto to be sorted. Thus, everyone in the German ghetto realized that their loved ones had been murdered.]

apartment. He did not live much longer in freedom himself, for he was killed very soon. His wife (née Minsker) lost her life in the ghetto.

Once again a savage hunt began in the city for the Jewish women who had Aryan husbands. If any of them had become widows by that time, they were brought forcibly into the ghetto at once. From the prisons we heard that there too Jews had been killed again. People said that the woman Communist Steklow had been among them.

Three Jews – one of them was named Eliasch – were shot because of sabotage in Milgrāvis (Mühlgraben), near the filling station. They had poured sand into the gasoline tanks. In the ghetto, the two Zfas sisters were shot, and for disseminating "false" rumors a certain Mr. Skutel (a former employee of the Abe Siew Company) was hanged.

In the women's camp there was now a Jewish women's police force in addition to the policeman Goldberg, who was succeeded by Weitz. Mrs. Margolin (from Kovno), Mrs. Nathan, Mrs. Purmel and later on Mrs. Krieger served in this women's police force. Their main task was to staff the work crews and supervise the sanitation facilities.

After the ghetto had been expanded twice, the Billeting Department appointed a custodian for each house. These posts were received by many well-known Riga figures such as Osiasohn, Akselrod (from Latfin), Manuchowitsch (from Liepāja), Botwinkin, Brandmann, Scheps (who had worked at the Feldhuhn Company), Schulmann, Belinki, Günsburg, Selionker, Jakobsohn, Segal, Lewinsohn and Dordik.

XIII.

Now I would like to report on the medical assistance in our ghetto, beginning with its establishment and ending with its liquidation (1941–1943). The first outpatient clinic was set up in the building of our ghetto administration on Līksnas Street. Initially only a small room on the second floor was available for it. For a long time the senior consultant was Dr. Wolpe; Dr. Blumenfeldt also played an important role.

When the ghetto was enlarged, the outpatient clinic received a specially equipped building of its own.

Dr. Magalif brought in most of the medicines; he had collected them in the Large Ghetto. Later the essentials were scavenged at the work stations, and thus the ghetto was really well supplied with medicines of all kinds. In this regard, another great source of support was the SSP (Sanitation Collection Point) commando. Its leader and the doctors who worked there, Dr. Jaworkowsky

and Dr. May, also made continual efforts to acquire medicines that might be needed.

Professor Mintz continued to hold a leading position in the outpatient clinic. From the beginning, he worked with the others without regard for his old age; in fact, he virtually sacrificed himself. His nephew, Dr. Mintz the surgeon, also did a great deal for us. Unfortunately he worked for us only briefly, as he died of tuberculosis while still very young. Dr. Blumenfeldt died of the same disease.

Other doctors in the ghetto were: Dr. Viktor Kretzer, Dr. Gitelsohn, Dr. Pewsner, the Jawitsch brothers, Dr. Berniker, Dr. Thal, Dr. Rogalin, Dr. Kahn and Dr. Wolpert. The latter also worked some of the time as a mechanic. Later, Dr. B. Jakobsohn (a nose, ear, and throat specialist) served as senior consultant.

In the women's ghetto only a small room was available to serve as an outpatient clinic. Dr. Joseph (from Vienna) and Dr. Michlin worked there. In this narrow space they even had to perform operations several times (the women were forbidden to bear any children, on pain of death). In accordance with the *Kommandant's* orders, the children who were born "accidentally" received a lethal injection immediately. I can only remember one woman who died there; it was Mrs. Berta Schatz. She left behind a pretty daughter of fifteen or sixteen, who died in the concentration camp, as I found out later.

The first-aid attendant in the clinic was Mr. Kaufert. The female first-aid attendants who worked there were S. Klebanow and Anja Gerber.

There was never a lack of patients. That was ensured by the difficult times and the excessive work. The nursing staff faced tremendous difficulties.

Incidentally, I have no doubt, though I can't prove it, that our doctors had received certain instructions from the Germans on how they were to treat their patients.

Nonetheless, all of the doctors helped us as much as they could, and it was a very simple matter to get from them a certificate of inability to work. They had no reason to rejoice when the German Jew Dr. Aufrecht became their senior consultant.* This was at the time of the "weapons incident", and the German ghetto's administration was, from then on, in charge of us.

In 1943 a hospital was set up on Mazā Kalna Street as well. Dr. Jakobsohn was a patient there for a long time, but he survived. Some major operations were performed in this hospital.

* [Ed.: Chief physician, a position he also held in the German ghetto.]

Doctors also worked in the work crews, including Dr. Blatt, Dr. Goldring, Dr. Solomir, Dr. Dawidsohn, Dr. Rudow, Dr. Goldberg, Dr. Günsburg and others.

Later, more doctors from the provinces joined them, but they were in the ghetto for only a very short time (Dr. Weinreich, Dr. Gurwitsch and others).

In time a dental clinic was also set up. Dr. Tumarkin worked there as senior consultant; Dr. Tschertas also worked there, as did the dental technician Iwanowitsch.

The dental technician Joselsohn (from Liepāja) worked in the German ghetto. There were also dentists in the satellite camps: Noim (Jr. and Sr.), Berniker, Scheinesohn and others.

Before the liquidation of the ghetto, all of the doctors were assigned to various satellite camps (see the chapter "Satellite Camps – Small Concentration Camps").

It is difficult for me as a layman to judge the performance of individual doctors correctly, but I can certainly say one thing and it is probably everyone's opinion: that all of the doctors sacrificed themselves for us, and in the history of our ghetto they can claim a special debt of gratitude.

Sadly, only a few of them survived.

Old Professor Mintz died doing hard labor and wearing prisoners' clothing in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Dr. Solomir, Dr. Gitelsohn, Dr. Berniker, Dr. Kretzer, Dr. Pewsner and others also lost their lives. I know nothing about the fate of Dr. Joseph; in any case, since my liberation I have heard nothing more about him. The dentist Dr. Tumarkin had an especially terrible death: before he died he lost his sanity. The dentists Berniker and Scheinesohn are also no longer alive.

And now I come to the subject of medical services in the German ghetto. I know little about it as such, but I do know this much: that from the beginning to the liquidation, the Jew Dr. Aufrecht worked there as Chief Physician. Several Jewish doctors were his assistants. I was told that he had a very arrogant manner and no understanding of our Jewish affairs at all. He was a man of coarse character and middling intelligence; being a willing tool, he always had support from the commandants Krause and Roschmann.

In the summer one would see the little doctor, wearing his glasses and an elegant white suit, in the company of the murderers. A well-equipped outpatient clinic was set up for the German Jews at 40 Ludzas Street. Nurse Kartun worked there as an assistant, and she really did a great deal of good for the

German Jews. Our brothers were well supplied with medicines by us Latvian Jews.

Dr. Aufrecht played an especially evil role when people were sent from the ghetto to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. He tried to send mainly Latvian Jews there.

But he came to a bad end at last. After the liquidation of the ghetto he went via the Lenta satellite camp to the Stutthof concentration camp and then to Lauenburg, where he was shot by the Russians after the liberation on account of "hard-hearted treatment of the Jews". *

XIV.

The hard winter of 1942 went by quickly, and the spring sun shone again! The saying that a hard winter is followed by a lovely spring and a hot summer proved true in the year 1942. By then we had grown convinced that the war would not end so soon, nor would our imprisonment.

No sooner had the sun melted the snow than we started thinking about our gardens. Initially people cultivated small plots, but later on they planted fairly large gardens in every free space. This work was directed by Sachar Margolin from Kovno.

The produce was used primarily for the hospitals and only secondarily for the inhabitants of the ghetto.

We too - that is, the inhabitants of our building - planted a community garden.

Gradually people settled in and adjusted to the prevailing conditions. By now, our young people had made the acquaintance of the young people of the German ghetto. There were very few women in our ghetto, and few men among the German Jews. In time, older people from our group began to form friendships in the German ghetto. For this reason, they sometimes spent their free time there. In the beginning, many of us whose wounds were still too fresh judged harshly everyone who sought distraction in the German ghetto. But in the course of time they too realized that life goes on, regardless of all

* [Ed.: Dr. Aufrecht tried his best to help, despite the fact that the hospital was at all times under the scrutiny of the German administration. He was nearsighted and thus failed to recognize people, a fact which led to his being called arrogant. He always wore his white doctor's coat, and never a white suit. He had no part in sending anyone to *Kaiserwald*; the groups' elders did that and since single people were sent first, the Latvian Jews were the obvious choice. After liberation in Lauenburg, Aufrecht found out that his wife Ilse had died. He lost his mind, screamed and ran amok. He screamed in German, and thus, a Russian soldier shot him. He died of a broken heart and of an ignorant soldier's bullet.]

good and bad occurrences. The only thing that was blameworthy was that some individuals really did not understand that they had to keep a necessary distance.

It was not easy to get into the German ghetto from ours and vice versa. For this we needed a special permit from our office, issued by the representative of the Jews, Leiser. But the German Jewish policemen often turned a blind eye if a person knew them or bribed them. Besides, the secretary of our ghetto administration, Boris Kaplan, was always very obliging in this regard.

The "spring season" was opened in the German ghetto with the shooting of the Czech gynecologist Dr. Ranzel. In the course of a house inspection Krause came to his room in Wienerstrasse* (Mazā Kalna Street). There he found not only Dr. Ranzel but also his wife and daughter. When Krause noticed that the wife was smoking, he punished her immediately with a slap in the face. The doctor, a former Czech officer, slapped him back, whereupon Krause drew his revolver and shot him on the spot.

In another incident, Krause got into a verbal exchange with a Latvian guard and swore at the man coarsely. The Latvian lifted his weapon threateningly in order to shoot him down. Krause was saved from death only because the German Jewish policeman Haar, who was standing nearby – a very strong man who used to be a boxer – tore the weapon out of the Latvian's hand and gave him a powerful shove besides. Of course Krause now took an interest in the man who had saved his life and rewarded him by making him the chief of the German-Jewish police force.

We Jews were also "very grateful" to Haar and proved it to him in a way that the reader will learn in the chapter on *Kaiserwald*.

XV.

In this chapter I would like to tell about the economic life of our ghetto.

Robert Schlomowitsch was the first director of the *Wirtschaftsamts* (Economic Authority). Later, after the "weapons incident", when Keilman was no longer in favor and thus was not eligible for the position of ghetto representative, he took over as director of the Economic Authority.

The larger the ghetto became, the more shops were opened to distribute food. The workers in these shops included Schmulian, the engineer Schlossberg, the Kraskin brothers (all of whom used to own lumber businesses),

* [Ed.: Berliner Strasse]

Feitelsohn (from Bauska), Meilach, Lat, Pitel, Isaak Tankelowitsch (from Livonia) and others.

Schlomowitsch (a brother of Robert's), Judelowitsch (from Lodz and Jelgava), Vogel and others worked as meat distributors.

The food for the shops was received from the central warehouses at the corner of Ludzas and Līksnas Streets. The managers of the central warehouses were Schmemann (from Liepāja) and Leibsohn.

All food acquisition was in the hands of Karaimski.

All of the goods allotted to the ghetto were brought in by our own drivers. Ljowa Neuburger and Moisej Soloweitschik were responsible for the transport department.

The larger satellite camps also got their food allotments from the main warehouse. But our drivers, accompanied by Latvian guards, brought the smaller camps their allotments.

Very modest amounts of food were distributed in exchange for food stamps. One can imagine how poor the quality of the food was. The only meat available was horsemeat.

Lette Broders (who had owned a textile factory) was the quartermaster for the area commissary. Every day he drove with Kölmann into the city in a horse-drawn carriage, accompanied by a Latvian guard, to take care of all the business matters there.

The Economic Authority was also in charge of a laundry set up by the Technical Authority. The laundry workers included Zijuni, Kaplan, Grausutis, Gutmann and Marjanowski. The latter two were the directors.

A barbershop was set up at 51 Ludzas Street, where our Riga barbers Feldhun, Matros, Schidlowski and others worked. The business manager was initially the engineer Jakobi (Varonis) and then Scher, who had been an insurance agent and later the *schamesch* (sexton) of the synagogue on Gogol Street.

In contrast to the Germans' clothing warehouse, ours was extremely meager. It was managed by a certain Mr. Balsohn. The rags that had been collected there, some of which were assigned to us, were processed in our tailoring shops, which had also been set up by the Economic Authority. A large number of Latvian and Lithuanian Jews worked there. For a short time the tailor Kukla was the director of these workshops.

Joselowitsch headed the newly set-up shoemakers' workshop. The lawyer Finkelstein, who had learned this trade, worked among the Latvian and Lithuanian shoemakers. No new leather was available, so they had to use old

shoes and leather clippings which we sometimes received from the area commissary.

We paid nothing for the food and services we received in the workshops.

XVI.

The *Technisches Amt* (Technical Authority) proved to be particularly useful from the first to the last day of its existence.

There the engineer Antikol had taken on a leading role. Not only was he a very skilled craftsman, but he also knew how to adapt to circumstances. He initiated a number of measures that made our life in the ghetto much easier.

This industrious engineer began to build and renovate, starting with nothing and without any kind of outside support. He had recruited excellent colleagues such as the engineer Saslawski, the architect Schneider, Botwinkin, and the talented teacher Lat as business manager. All of them understood our desperate need and tried to alleviate it. Their first task was to set up a bathhouse as soon as possible, for we needed one desperately. Its opening day was a genuine holiday for us.

Although the room available for it was very small, nonetheless a fairly large number of people could be served in a day. Everything connected with the bathhouse was taken care of by the engineer Lewi, the pharmacist Purlmel, Weissbein (director of the Jewish theater) and others.

Our women also used the bathhouse. They came in groups from their ghetto, accompanied by their policewomen. Now and then we also had other "customers" from the German ghetto. The bathhouse also served as a delousing station. We felt that the short time we were allowed to spend bathing was a true paradise, and none of us could find enough words to express his delight to the bathhouse directors.

In the summer of 1942 the Technical Authority set up cold open-air showers for us as a further amenity, and in the summer of 1943 this facility was even expanded.

In the large workshops of the Technical Authority various objects were produced not only for us but also for the area commissary.

Young people were recruited for this work (by Pukin) in order to give them the opportunity to learn a trade. In time, a kind of vocational school developed.

After the ghetto had been expanded twice, the Technical Authority also renovated and repaired the apartments. The harsh winter of 1941/42 had

caused a great deal of damage to the empty houses. Water and sewage pipes had burst almost everywhere.

An outpatient clinic and a hospital were also set up.

The German ghetto also claimed the engineer Antikol's diligence for various technical tasks. He could often be seen there, accompanied by his coworkers, helping our German brothers.

He set up a special kitchen for his large staff of helpers.

In June 1943 the Technical Authority received its first blow: its workers were arrested in the "weapons incident".

The next blow was that Sauer, the commandant of *Kaiserwald*, sent his people (including Mister X) one Saturday to take away all the machines. This occurred a short time before the final liquidation of the ghetto.

In any case, we survivors will always remember the Technical Authority and the engineers Antikol, Saslawski and others with the greatest gratitude.

When we found out after our liberation that these people, who had been so devoted to us, had all died, we felt genuine pain.

XVII.

Gradually we began to lose heart. All our hopes had been pinned on the spring offensive that was to clarify our situation. Spring was almost over, and there was still no movement on any front.

The only offensive that was being made was in the ether. All the warring parties waged war by means of the radio. This duel of words greatly excited us as well. Incidentally, our "the Jews want it that way" news also provided an abundance of material for this type of struggle.

But the offensive did begin after all, at the last moment, and it was made by the Germans. German military forces pressed in on Moscow from all directions. In the military reports of the one side we heard the names Orjol and Kursk-Wjasma; in those of the other, Staraja Russa and even Schlüsselburg near Leningrad.

From these reports we realized that the situation was very bad, but probably worst of all for us!

Nonetheless, life in the ghetto went on. They began to move workers into a satellite camp for peat-cutting. Nobody was keen to do this work, for everyone still remembered the thirty-two girls who had been shot in Olaine.

To fill the satellite camp, they recruited mainly convicted criminals and people who were serving prison sentences.

The ghetto was expanded a second time. A large piece of the old ghetto was added to it.

The Linas Hazedek hospital (financed by the Sobolewitsch Foundation) was separated from the ghetto complex and taken over by the SS as a field hospital. Now wounded SS people stood on the balconies jeering at our work crews as they marched past.

The German police officer Hesfer, who had been in charge of the guards, also left the ghetto. But before he left he shot a young man named Dworkow who had dared to enter the German ghetto without permission. Hesfer's successor was not a bad human being.

Our police chief Wand appointed the German Jew Schneider to be his deputy.

Poss had taken over the directorship of all of the offices.

A child was born in the Schlossberg family (who had owned a dairy) in the ghetto, and initially it was concealed for a time. It received the name Ben-Ghetto (son of the ghetto).

The summer of 1942 cost us a great many human lives. However, I can only recall a few of their names: Fait and Sapugo are still in my memory. Fait, a giant in terms of physical stature, was hanged because of a shoot-out in the ghetto, and Sapugo was shot because one time he had scavenged nails.

Three women from Cologne had their heads shaved. They had large placards inscribed "We traded" hung around their necks and had to stand there like that until all the columns had marched past them.

Although the sight of them made a deep impression on us, we continued to trade nonetheless.

A transport of sixteen persons was sent to Ugāle in Kurzeme, where they were forced to do hard labor in the Dombrowski lumberyard. We heard nothing more about them during the entire ghetto period, and we assumed they were no longer alive. But at the end of 1943 they turned up again in the Kaiserwald concentration camp. Among them was my comrade Smitzkowitsch. Only Paul Edelman was missing: he had been shot while trying to escape.

Incidentally, people from the ghetto were also used for medical experiments. Strong, healthy men were chosen, and they did not return from these selections.*

* [Ed.: Some of them survived. See "Human Guinea Pigs" by Semyon Peyros in *Muted Voices* by Gertrude Schneider, pp. 56-77]

The SS man Migge made himself very unpopular in the ghetto after he became the economic director of the SD. He too had human lives on his conscience.

XVIII.

*"Es gehen Kolonnes,
Es gehen Korbones..."*

*(Columns are marching,
Victims are marching...)*
(Ghetto song)

The work crews began to gather for work at six o'clock in the morning. The Latvian Jews had to stand in rows on Viļānu Street, the women in the women's ghetto, and the German Jewish men and women on Pragerstrasse.

In the beginning our exit gate was on Viļānu Street. Later, after the German Jews arrived, we joined their columns at the Prague Gate and then walked down bloody Ludzas Street. After some time, to "simplify" our route, we made a virtual round trip through Lauvas and Lielā Kalna Streets.

The Jewish officials of the Labor Authority stood at the various exit gates. For us it was Kassel and Maisel, for the women it was the policewomen, and for the German Jews it was Schultz from Cologne. The latter was usually accompanied by some dubious characters who simply beat people up when they felt like it.* The groups' representatives were also present.

In both winter and summer, Kassel had his traditional walking stick in his hand. He and Maisel always treated us decently.

As we marched through the ghetto gates, the leaders of the columns carefully mustered each column, comparing it with their notes, before it was finally permitted to depart for work. We went to our work sites without guards. Only a representative of the work site, an Aryan, had to pick us up and bring us back. Thus he bore the entire responsibility for us. When we returned, the column leader had to register our departure at the work station.

Sometimes the people sent by the work stations to pick us up were young women or teenage boys. Whichever it was - what a heavy guard for our entire column!

* [Ed.: The two assistants of Schultz, also from Cologne, never laid a hand on any Jew. Both Schiff and Baum were helpful rather than harmful.]

Jews worked everywhere. Even private companies would occasionally call for individual specialists from the ghetto.

In 1943 my son and I worked in a workshop (Aizkars Company) that I had originally founded. Our commando was called "Father and Son"!

After our columns had been combined with those of the women and then with those of the German Jews, all of us marched to work together.

The column leader went first. Sometimes there were two leaders, one for the Latvian Jews and the other for the German Jews. The Aryan escort marched beside us. Everyone carried a large bag and his mess tin around with him.

One could clearly see the work crews' condition deteriorating from day to day. The neglect, dirt, and wear and tear increased constantly. Our appearance certainly made a bad impression in the city, but we thought to ourselves: the others are the ones who should be ashamed of it!

And now the work crews marched!

The first ones to be seen were the Jews of the field command headquarters with their column leader Pukin, who was later succeeded by Klein. Buwitsch always pushed his way toward the front, because he liked to play the role of work crew representative.

The next was the work crew of the *Heeresverpflegungslager* (Army Rations Warehouse) or HVL. This work crew consisted of especially strong and healthy young men who were exceptionally good at "finding and scavenging". Glaser was their representative. This work crew was a great source of support for the ghetto.

After them marched the work crew for the Billeting Department, led by Jakobsohn (of the yacht club), who was tall and strong. There were many Jewish intellectuals in this troop (Dr. Solomir, the lawyer Jewelsohn and others), but as time went on they became fewer and fewer in number.

The next ones to go to their work stations were the subdivisions of the field command headquarters: the Soldiers' Home I and II work crews and the bordello work crew (which had to take care of the cleaning, heating and so on in the bordellos).

Dr. Dawidsohn, Wachtel, Gordon, Mrs. Gertzik, Abram and others were in the aforementioned work crews.

A new work crew was formed: the slaughterhouse work crew, which consisted of German and Latvian Jews. Among the German Jews were Rabbi Ungar from Cologne and the *schamesch* (sexton) of the Cologne synagogue. Among the Latvian Jews were Dumesch, R. Schub and many others.

The NSDAP work crew included A. Lazer, A. Tukazier, the agronomist Kodesch, Sch. Kahn, Paul Schermann and others.

A large work crew consisting of young German Jewish girls, the Pharmazia work crew, was the next in line. It included the yellow-haired Litzie from Berlin, who was a familiar figure in the ghetto. My son and I had the good fortune to march out together with this work crew. In this group there were also a few shoemakers who worked in private workshops and a certain Mr. Roskin, who worked at the former Albrecht Company.

The next work crew, which went to the Railroad Command Headquarters, worked in two shifts. The leading personality in this group was Zeitlin (of the banking house).

Next we could see the *Heereskraftpark* (Army Vehicle Park) or HKP work crew, led by the strict German Jew Salaman. A former captain in the German army, he knew how to lead his "regiment".

The *Piensaimniecības* (Dairy) work crew was next, with Abe Etschin and Tewja "Milky" Behrmann of Riga. I too worked here for a short time together with my comrades Atlas, Michelsohn, Schlossberg and others. We will not forget the pretty Liesel from Cologne, who also worked there.

This work crew was deployed at the Egg Division and the casein factory, where Westermann, Gersohn, Kassel, Raizin and others worked.

Thus practically the entire ghetto was on the march, for one work crew followed another.

Next was the Dental Station work crew. Its proud leader was Dr. Noim. He was followed by the dentists Dr. Wigdortschik Jr. and Dr. Frisch and by the dental technicians M. Katz, Straschun, A. Michalischek, Drabkin, Feldmann, A. Tabak and others.

The *Sanitätssammelpunkt* (Sanitation Collection Point) or SSP work crew included Golombek, Child Kahn, Dr. Jaworkowsky, Bubi Kramer and others.

Another work crew had to work at the Pulvertornis (Gunpowder Tower) across from Basteja Boulevard.

The forced-labor crew for Šķīrotava (the railroad dispatching station) was led by Chait, who had been a merchant of upholstery fabrics.

The railroad work crew included the Leikin brothers and others.

The War Ministry work crew was led by Sobolewitsch, followed by Friedmann, Siga Blankenstein and others.

The Sixth Regiment work crew was led by Nathan Kagan, then by Hirsch Polonski, and later by Dannenhirsch (Makkabi). This work crew included

many craftsmen – shoemakers, tailors and the like – all of whom worked in the barracks of the old Latvian Sixth Regiment.

The Hotel Rome work crew was led by E. Borkum.

The Rosenberg staff unit included almost exclusively intellectuals, whose task was to sort books. Even in the former offices of the newspaper "*Segodnia*" (Today), the typesetters were Jews.

Next was the Knights' Hall work crew, which was initially led by Sacharow and later by Seligsohn. This group included Beljak, the Lewin brothers, Minsker, Arthur Kaufmann for a time, and others.

The SS field hospital's work crew was assigned to our former Bikur Cholim hospital. There were many other work crews.

Now came the work crews that worked inside the ghetto.

There was, for example, the large "66" work crew, which worked in the area commissary at 66 Ludzas Street. Hofschowitsch marched at the head of it like a general. Those who followed him included Professor Metz, Dubrow, Vogel, Mischa Gurwitsch, Behrmann, Maisel, Mrs. Kassel, Grikpetz and many others, as well as a large group of watchmakers, including Preiss, Benjamin, Edelstein, Boris Slawin, Glück, Brün, Harry Gottlieb, Kuptzik, Buchbinder and others.

The delousing work crew worked not only in the ghetto but also at 34 Gertrüdes Street.

Besides the work crews listed above there were also numerous others, in which women, men and teenagers were forced to work.

I have already written a great deal about these work crews in previous chapters of my book. Here I would like to go into more detail about only one area, namely the treatment that was suffered only too often by the members of our work crews.

Once a Jew was brought from the ghetto to the First City Hospital to repair a tin roof there. After working for a long time, he slid off the roof because of his weakened condition and fell into the courtyard. German and Latvian doctors who were nearby saw him lying there half-dead, but nobody found it necessary to help him in any way. Finally a nurse decided to help him, but she had to give up her intention at once, because the doctors who were standing around reproached her bitterly for it. The only thing that happened was that the accident was reported to the ghetto by telephone so that a car would come to take him away. What was finally taken away was only a corpse.

An eyewitness told me about this incident. All kinds of accidents happened at the work stations. Some of them even resulted in the amputation of a leg (as in the case of Schlossberg) or the loss of other limbs.

On another occasion the Jewish policeman Blankenfeldt was killed by a car that hit him as he was on his way to work in the city. His corpse was brought back to the ghetto, and here the patrolman Albrecht spoke the following cynical words about the incident: "This is the only Jew who has died a natural death."

XIX.

In contrast to the Reich Jewish ghetto, cultural and religious life seemed to be quite dead in our ghetto; but it continued to exist unofficially.

I can no longer remember whether ordinances or prohibitions were also passed against culture and religion. I don't believe they were. In any case, we had already experienced such an endless number of hardships, everything Jewish had been so destroyed and besmirched to the last remnant, that we were simply frightened to provide any occasion for new acts of malice and repression.

Therefore we prayed in silence and studied in silence.

There was an unofficial house of prayer on Līksnas Street, and people still gathered in some private homes for religious services as well. For example, people prayed at the home of the lawyer Wittenberg and in the evening after the *Maarew* (evening prayer) they studied a *blatt Gemore* (page of the Talmud).

Besides the host, the participants of these discussions of the Talmud usually included Dubin's son and his brother, Golowtschiner, Feinstein and his sons, Borchowik and many others. On the holy days our cantors prayed (see the chapter "Art in the Riga Ghettos and Concentration Camps"). In the house I lived in, there was also a house of prayer in the room of our "custodian" Feinstein, who had formerly been a *schochat* (ritual slaughterer) and a *maschgiach* (supervisor in a *yeshiva*, or Talmud school).

We had saved the holy writings (*sifrei toras*) from the Large Ghetto, and later on when the transports to the satellite camps and concentration camps started, we secretly took them with us to these places.

There were also some rabbis in the ghetto. I hadn't known them as rabbis in Riga, for they were actually Talmud students. They had to go to work just as we did, but they were put into work crews that left them free on Saturdays and holy days.

Before Easter, matzos were baked in an oven built specially for that purpose at 57 Ludzas Street, in a house just across the street from the command headquarters, and these were distributed to everybody. We had our ghetto administration to thank for that. Of course they were baked in secret, and our Jewish policemen made sure that nothing was discovered.

There was a "secret school" for those children who still remained. One of the few teachers was Miss Fiks. It was very difficult to acquire books, but the children were at least quite well taken care of as far as food and other necessities were concerned.

XX.

In the ghetto for the Jews from the Reich, religious life was expressly permitted. Through a friend, Mr. Bloch from Cologne, I received an invitation to a religious service, the *kabolas Sabbath* (Saturday evening prayer) in the synagogue of the Cologne group.

I was absolutely astonished to find myself in a real synagogue. It was in a large hall on Kölnerstrasse, across from the old Jewish cemetery, and was richly equipped. A beautiful *oroin-koidesch* (holy ark) with an ornamented *poroiches* (curtain) was in it. Various inscriptions in Yiddish and German hung on the walls; some were in the Cologne dialect, which I could not understand at all. The walls were also decorated with embroidery done by the women. The whole room was extremely clean and quiet.

Bloch introduced me to the prominent members of the German Jewish community. He started with Leiser and went on to all kinds of other public figures, nearly all of whom had titles.

There were also many women, even young women, in the synagogue. The Cologne cantor was determined to display his artistry. I was very impressed by the prayer "*Lecho dodi*", which was sung by everyone, men and women together. Finally Bloch the *gaabe* (head of the community) proposed that the cantor sing a German Jewish folk song in honor of the guest. The text of the song included exceptionally beautiful words that were appropriate to the time, but unfortunately his rendition of it was very poor. The performance was more *jeckish** than Jewish.

Shortly thereafter I was once again invited to the synagogue to participate in the *Kol Nidrei* on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

* [Ed.: nickname for German Jews.]

A large crowd had gathered and everyone was weeping. But I missed a clear feeling of "this is ours".

For the larger and smaller children there were children's schools in the German ghetto. The necessary teachers were available. Sometimes lectures were held on very interesting topics. The number of people who were interested in such lectures was much greater in the German ghetto than in ours.

I could tell various stories about the individuals who were active in the cultural life of the German ghetto, but after so many years of terrible experiences it has become too difficult for me.

Now the reader will be astonished when I report that there was a Catholic church in the ghetto.* Fleischel, the elder of the Hanover group, was a Catholic, and as such he sometimes celebrated a mass for the Jews who had converted to Catholicism, playing the role of a priest.

XXI.

The early autumn of 1942 was a time of military victories for the Germans. Although the Russians put up strong resistance, the Germans were moving closer to Moscow and Leningrad. In the south they were pushing towards the Black Sea and the Caucasus, and from Ukraine they were marching toward Stalingrad.

Our situation was sad indeed. Because of the continual acts of murder we were losing more people every day. We tried to make contact with the outside world in the hope that it could still rescue us.

At this time there arose a "Swedish group" whose intention was to escape to Sweden. Now events unfolded as follows: a certain Mulja Srago worked together with his mother and his sister Raja at a work station of the *Wehrmacht*, the *Frontleitstelle* (Front Regional Headquarters). Through her work Raja met a traveling non-commissioned officer of the *Luftwaffe* (air force). He treated her very well and gave her food for herself and her family several times, so she came to trust him. Later he even offered her the opportunity to escape to Sweden. It was agreed that this would be paid for in gold and jewels. The other people who were to escape to Sweden were to be transported in small groups of three to four. The first group consisted of Raja, her mother and her brother; the following groups were to include the lawyer Jewelsohn, the singer Kristal, Dr. Freidberg, Abrascha Lewi, Folia Sacharow and others. All of them had already paid for their passports.

* [Ed.: The "Church" was located in Fleischel's apartment.]

But later it turned out that the helpful non-commissioned officer was a Gestapo agent. As the first group stepped onto the steamship it was arrested by Commandant Krause. Srago resisted and was shot immediately by Krause on board the ship. His mother and sister were taken to prison and died there. The others – Jewelsohn, Kristal, Freidberg and Sacharow – were also arrested and taken to prison (see the chapter on the Central and Terminal Prisons). Lewi, however, managed to hide for a long time under another name.

A second group, known as the "Spanish group", had also formed, consisting of the jurist Boris Kaplan and two other people. They worked in the Billeting Department and there they met a Spanish officer of the Blue Division who promised to take them to Spain. They did reach the Spanish border, but when they tried to exchange money there they were arrested by the Gestapo, brought back to Riga, and put into prison there.

People said that a certain Günsburg (a film entrepreneur) had been a member of this group. As far as I know, he is living today in Belgium under another name.

In the difficult days of the month of Elul we wept a great deal. But finally the *Simchas Tora* holiday arrived. It happened to fall on a Sunday on which I had to work. As I came back at noon with my son, I saw from afar that columns were marching in the ghetto. I started to tremble and didn't know what to do. Should we go back into the city and hide? I was convinced that this was a new resettlement operation.

But when I reached the gate and asked our Jewish policeman what was going on, he explained that nothing dangerous was happening, it was simply a money collection. Because I had great trust in "our boys", I went calmly into the ghetto.

Our building's custodian told me that everyone had to march forward in closed columns to the Jewish cemetery. Everyone was to take with him his money and valuables, because there they would be handed over in the presence of the *Kommandant*.

My son took along five DM and left, saying, "I'll give them *kadoches* (misery)." But I stayed home. People told me that *Kommandant* Krause was standing by the cemetery with his assistant Gymnich and others. Our elder Kölmann and Wand were also there. As they marched past, the columns threw only their "small change" into the baskets that had been set up.

When the *Kommandant* noticed this, he motioned to Kölmann to come to him and made him stand with his face toward the cemetery wall. There he had to stay, tormented by fear, until the collection procedure was over.

That evening, when the take had been counted up at the command headquarters, it was of course concluded that it was much too low. Thereupon the *Kommandant* summoned Kölmann and Wand and informed them that if any money or valuables should still be found in anyone's possession, they too - that is, Kölmann and Wand - would be put to death. The deadline for the second "voluntary contribution" was set for three days later.

Kölmann and Wand, who realized at once that the situation was serious, called in the prominent members of our ghetto so that they could discuss the situation with them and immediately draw up a list of wealthy people who were in the ghetto. All those on the list were forced to make a contribution consisting of paper money, gold rubles and valuables. Large wooden boxes were used for this collection and the contents were then handed over to "*Herr Kommandant*".

Moreover, part of the total was used to buy a solid-gold cigar case for the *Kommandant*, which was then filled with gold coins and jewels. This was intended to "soothe" him somewhat. Three persons, including Wand, handed it over. Later the rumor arose that Wand had intended to keep the cigar case for himself, but the presence of the other two had prevented him from doing so. People also said that only a fraction of the entire collection had landed in the SD coffers, and that a far larger part had remained with the "prominent figures". In any case, by paying well we avoided a *gzeire* (affliction). We were satisfied, and the *Kommandant* was even more so!

After the columns returned from the money collection, our policeman Damski was standing at the Prague Gate. He turned to the people passing him and said, smiling, "That's what you stupid boys get for going into the German ghetto and pretending to be well-to-do!"

Nonetheless, the order to give up our money claimed some victims later on; it was discovered that certain people had money, and they were shot on the spot.

After people had been talking about it for some time, about 350 Jews - men, women and children - arrived on 25 October 1942 from Lithuania. Among them were some very well-known people. The new arrivals were taken from the railroad station directly to the Spilve camp (see the chapter "Satellite Camps - Small Concentration Camps"). This arrival caused great joy among the Lithuanian Jews in the ghetto, for some of their relatives were among the new arrivals.

XXII.

On 31 October 1942 the ghetto's peace was disturbed yet again; this happened on a Saturday. That morning, as I was getting ready for work and was already half-dressed, my neighbor knocked on the door, saying, "Everyone has to report to Viļānu Street for roll call." My son and I tried to guess what this might mean. I rushed at once to the attic to hide my little hoard of money and our remaining valuables in the sand that was lying there for protection against air attacks. I kept behind a few gold coins (which were sewn into our clothes) for my son and me, in case we might need them. My boy, who was looking out of an attic window, noticed a great commotion on Ludzas Street. He didn't want to come down from the attic at all; instead he wanted to hide on the roof, which was already covered with hoarfrost. With great effort I finally convinced him to follow me to the columns that were forming in Viļānu Street.

On the way there we met many armed SD men wearing the skull insignia. They were swarming through the entire ghetto, hunting people down, breaking down locked doors and searching all the apartments.

They even stormed into the hospital on Mazā Kalna Street and dragged Friedman the policeman, who was ill, out of it. All of Viļānu Street was full of people. They had lined up as usual in their work crews. We were very frightened and totally unable to determine what was going on. From afar we saw that the police station was surrounded by a cordon of SD men.

Now it was announced that all the work crews should march to work. This relieved the tension somewhat. Armed SD men were standing directly at the ghetto exit at the corner of Viļānu and Ludzas Streets. They were led by the SS man Gymnich. The SD men now pulled the older people out of the columns that were marching by and made them move to the side.

That morning I had not had time to shave and thus looked older than I was. In my fear, I made my way to the very middle of the work crew so as not to be seen. My son, a tall boy with broad shoulders, tried to hide me by moving in front of me. In this way we passed the first gate successfully. I will never be able to forget how my friend Abrascha Slutzkin looked as I walked past him! He stood at the side among those who had been selected out; he was wearing a summer coat and looked very wretched after a long illness. He was pleading with Gymnich and trying to explain to him that he was the column leader and had to go to his work site. Gymnich simply pushed him back with a blow of his fist. Some of the other people who had been forced to step to the side tried to slip away unnoticed, but the SD men beat them with their guns.

Among the people who had been set aside I also saw Dr. Noim, Günsburg and many others.

On Ludzas Street we met the Gestapo leaders Dr. Lange, and our *Kommandant* Krause. As we marched past the German ghetto I noticed that it was completely calm. At that point all of us realized that the entire catastrophe had come down on us alone!

Now we had to pass through the second gate on Ludzas Street. There the same procedure took place. Some of the older people tried to argue that they were skilled craftsmen and had to get to their work sites, but this did them no good. Our column got through without any losses.

When we arrived at our work site, what we had just experienced reminded us of the "twelve bloody days". We were absolutely unable to calm down, and at midday we sent a soldier from the command headquarters to find out what was going on in the ghetto. He came back with the news that at that moment (12 noon) things were once again quiet there. But we were still nervous and finally managed to get released earlier than usual.

As we came back into the ghetto we noticed that our policemen were no longer there. In their place were newly appointed German Jewish policemen who had been stationed along the ghetto fence. They were wearing new arm-bands bearing the letters OD for *Ordnungsdienst* (Order Service).

We also noticed that a large printed announcement had been put up. Because we were marching fast we were unable to read it. Hardly had we entered the ghetto than we realized what had happened there that morning.

On Friday afternoon a roll call of the Jewish police had been scheduled, as always. At the last moment it had been cancelled. That same evening, the roll call was ordered once again for Saturday morning. As all of the policemen were gathering for this purpose in the courtyard of the command headquarters, Police Chief Wand, and labor department heads Kassel and Maisel appeared. The *Kommandant*, accompanied by high-ranking officers, also appeared and gave a speech whose gist was that he no longer trusted the police. Wand, Kassel and Maisel had to step aside, the policemen were surrounded by SD men, and each of them was searched. When this was over, a march toward Blech Square in the German ghetto began.

The senior policeman, Anatoli Natan, marched at the head of the group. Initially he and the others seemed not at all uneasy. But as they arrived at Blech Square on the Maskavas Street side, they already had a dim feeling that something was about to happen.

Suddenly Natan shouted, "Run, boys, let's try to save ourselves!" At that moment everyone began to run, and hidden machine guns began to rattle as they shot at the defenseless men. Some were wounded immediately and hung on the fence of Maskavas Street. Only a few – three people – managed to escape. One of them was young Genkin. Though his foot was shattered and bleeding profusely, he dragged himself into the German ghetto and hid there. He sought shelter in a house that was being renovated. SD men who were looking for him found his trail and ordered the people who were working there to hand him over at once. The workers claimed they hadn't seen anyone, whereupon the SD people arrested a man who lived there, together with his wife and children. After the escapee had been found and arrested, the couple was shot and the children were released. Genkin himself was of course shot dead. Before this happened, he had written a last message (*zawoe*) in blood to his sweetheart in the German hospital.

The fate of the other two policemen who escaped was also sad, and I will tell more about them later on.

After this "work" was finished, the SD people left the ghetto.

The older men who had been forced to step aside that morning – 108 in all – had been transported in large blue buses to the Central Prison. I know that at the last moment two of them, Georg Steingold and Chaim Steingold, managed to save themselves, so that in fact only 106 people were taken away. They were killed the same night in the Biķernieki forest.

The morning after the murder of the policemen, our drivers were ordered to take the corpses from Blech Square and elsewhere to the cemetery to be buried. Before this happened, the chief of the German police, Frankenberg, came with his assistants Haar and Perl to identify the men who had been shot. It was discovered that two policemen, Israelowitsch and Damski, were missing. The dead men's clothes and bodies had been riddled by machine-gun bullets. There were forty corpses in all.

An SD man who had been hit by a stray bullet also died. In the summer of 1943 his comrades erected a memorial stone on the spot where he had died and decorated it with flowers.

XXIII.

In the meantime, we too were now reading the newly posted announcements that we had seen from afar. They read:

"Jews armed with guns have escaped from the ghetto. Those among them who are apprehended will be brought back to the ghetto and publicly hanged!

Although the Command Headquarters had warned the policemen, they paid these warnings no heed whatsoever. The result of this heedlessness can be seen today.

The Jews are hereby warned and ordered to

1. strictly obey all orders, and
2. go to work punctually.
3. It is forbidden to leave places of residence after 8 p.m."

The following morning, a Sunday, a second announcement of the command-ship was posted:

- "1. The Latvian Ghetto will be annexed to the German ghetto.
2. The ghetto will be divided into two parts, Group R (Reichs Juden) and Group L (Latvians).
3. The leadership of both groups will remain in the hands of council of Group R.
4. Frankenberg will continue as the police chief of the Command Headquarters.
5. The police chiefs of Groups R and L will be Haar and Perl respectively."

In effect, we had now lost all of our leadership in the ghetto. Max Leiser from Cologne became the elder of both ghettos. Wand was added to elders as the representative of Group L. Kölmann took over the administration of economic affairs. All the other positions remained in the hands of the Latvian Jews.

XXIV.

Before I return to the events of the final days, I would like to devote the following brief chapter to the memory of the policemen who died so tragically.

Precisely because there have been no good reports about the behavior of the police in other ghettos and camps, I believe it is my duty to solemnly declare here - not only in my own name but also in the name of my surviving comrades, all of whom knew our ghetto conditions in detail - that all the policemen who died held very nationalistic views. They did their duty with the sole intention of making our lives easier. They included some of our best young men and we were extremely proud of them. They were true heroes who always fought for us bravely and went heroically to their death.

We Jews who were saved will never forget them and will always hold their memory sacred!

The deaths of Blankenstein and Safro were especially tragic, for unfortunately both of them had just joined the police force the previous week. By con-

trast, Hofschowitz, Berner, Weitz, Gutkin, Smitzkowitsch, Peretzmann, Dolgitzer, Abraham and Harrik had given up their positions in the police force and thus saved their lives.

Of the forty-two men who died, I still remember the following names:

1. Natan, Anatoli	17. Grikpetz
2. Bag	18. Glaser, Moische
3. Liwschitz, Boris	19. Seligsohn
4. Lurie	20. Paik
5. Ulmann	21. Golodetz
6. Schabelstock, Ch.	22. Blumenthal, Georg
7. Pommeranz	23. Schlomowitsch
8. Schatz, Schmaja (Kovno)	24. Marjanowski
9. Lewit (Kovno)	25. Kölmann, David
10. Aschmann	26. Dubin, Simon
11. Menzowski	27. Goldberg, Naum
12. Blankenstein, Siga	28. Gurewitsch, Sascha
13. Tankel	29. Steinbock
14. Safro, Senia	30. Mayer (German emigrant)
15. Genkin	31. Blumenthal (jurist)
16. Freidberg	32. Damski, Meilach

XXV.

The ghetto was plunged into mourning. Through this *Aktion* we had lost our best young men and many from "old Riga".

Now we waited for the public hanging of the men who had been arrested, according to the posted announcement of the command headquarters. But even after some time had passed we still knew nothing definite about the incident, for nobody had been brought into the ghetto as yet.

Later people said – I myself was told this in confidence by an Aryan – that on 28 October a truck had been stopped behind the Kvadrāts factory on the road to Daugavpils. The truck driver was a Latvian. In the truck were some Jewish youths from the ghetto who intended to join the partisans. When the Gestapo stopped the truck, the Jews threw hand grenades at them. A real shoot-out broke out. Three of the four Gestapo men were killed at once. The fourth, who was slightly wounded, disappeared together with the truck and the driver.

Some of the Jews were also killed; but Eljaschow, who was badly wounded, came back to the ghetto, where he soon died.

Thus 150 people had been shot in reprisal for the death of the three SD men, fifty for each of them. The arrests spoken of by the command headquarters had never taken place. They had served merely as a means of intimidation. It was said that our boys in the truck had been betrayed by the Latvian driver.

XXVI.

The distance between the Latvian Jews and the German Jews continued to grow. In the ghetto, people started to clearly feel the German Jews' power. Some of us claimed that the visits, close relationships and confidential conversations that had been cultivated between our ghetto and that of the Reich Jews were the cause of our misery during that period.

The release of our police chief Wand remained a continuing mystery to us, whereas the release of Kassel and Maisel, who were in charge of the work crews, seemed justified. The stupid conversations Wand had had with the *Kommandant* during the last police roll call had greatly shaken our trust in him.

All of these things created a hostile attitude toward the German Jews, and we often thought, "So this is the thanks we get for trying as soon as they arrived to help them cope with all their difficulties." But others were of the opinion that our many relatives and our Large Ghetto itself had been destroyed because they had come and consequently more space was needed.*

The German police implemented strict measures against us. Our custodians had to report to them every day whether any inhabitant of their respective houses was missing. Every individual was responsible for the presence of his neighbor.

An intense search was mounted for the two policemen who had gone missing from Blech Square. As we learned later, these two men had first hidden in the Reich Jewish ghetto and then returned to our ghetto through the fence that evening.

After a short time the policeman Israelowitsch went, in disguise, to the city with a work crew. Damski was hidden by us in the ghetto for a fairly long time. Both of them had been involved in the "weapons incident".

* [Ed. This belief was wholly unfounded. Jews from the Reich were killed even before the Latvian Jews' massacre. When there was a lack of workers in Riga's numerous military installations, the Germans decided to let the newly arrived Jews from the Reich live for the time being.]

At that time some people were brought into the ghetto from the barracks camps and work stations on account of various "crimes" – for example, the whole OT (*Organisation Todt*) commando. They were later released. These arrests were caused by the flight of a certain Wolfowitsch. I was unable to find out whether Wolfowitsch was one of the young men whose truck had been stopped on the road to Daugavpils. In any case, he had had something to do with the weapons incident.

The leader of the Pulvertornis (Gunpowder Tower) work column was also arrested. One day, as he was going to work on Valņu Street, he was noticed by a Latvian who had formerly been his comrade in the Communist Party's youth group Komjaunatne. The treacherous Latvian could hardly wait to denounce him to the ghetto command headquarters for membership in Komjaunatne. For this reason he was arrested and taken to prison. This event had nothing to do with the weapons incident.

At the end of the year we received a small pleasure: the notorious murderer Tichel was badly wounded in a house on Grīziņkalns (Griesenberg) during a search for a Russian parachutist.

Some time later our columns saw him, quite frail, near his apartment in Avotu Street (in the house that had belonged to the Galant brothers), as they marched by.

Blood calls for blood!

The year 1942 was coming to an end. Another year gone by! A year full of pain and suffering, and the end was still not in sight!

XXVII.

The year 1943 began against the background of the Allied armies' victories on all fronts.

Of course this fact colored the traditional New Year's Day speeches of the leading German statesmen and the *Führer*. In their various addresses, they even confirmed the "temporary" defeats that had taken place. But they went on to say that the present situation was only a prelude to the great endeavors being planned by the German general staff. New weapons (the V1) were announced which would totally transform the whole conduct of the war and would surely lead to the final defeat of the Allies. Nor did they forget us, "those who were to blame for the war". The war they had declared against us would be pursued to the end (they had been right on this point), and so forth.

But there was tremendous dissatisfaction among the German people. Members of the general staff already foresaw the great catastrophe that was facing

Germany. Slowly a fire was starting to smolder which in the following year flared up brightly in the form of a *putsch* (attempted coup). This attempt was, however, very ruthlessly suppressed by Hitler and his "faithful" and cost the lives of many key officers such as von Stauffenberg, Witzleben, von der Schulenburg and others.

The key Allied leaders – Roosevelt, Stalin, the King of England and Churchill – also declared in their speeches that the war would be pursued to a victorious end. They hoped that "perhaps" this year would already bring freedom for all the peoples of the world.

For those of us who were sitting in the ghettos and experiencing our tragedy, these were merely comforting phrases. The promise that our misery would perhaps end in the year to come could not help us. Even then, only a few thousand out of tens of thousands of Latvian Jews were left, and they too were growing fewer from day to day.

Only the reports from the front were like camphor shots that kept us alive. We lived on the defeat at Stalingrad; we lived on the defeat of the German military forces led by General Rommel in Africa. We knew we no longer had much time in this life, but still we wanted to see the destruction of those who had destroyed us.

"Tomus nafschi im Plischtim!

(My death together with the Philistines!)

Stalingrad, Stalingrad!"

That was the only thing we heard! We pushed all our cares aside. We still did not know any details. The Germans reported that Stalingrad had been occupied. The Russians reported the contrary.

Finally came the day of mourning ordered by Hitler to mark the defeat at Stalingrad. Whole newspaper pages were devoted to the heroes who had fought so "bravely". The generals who had been taken prisoner were retroactively appointed General Field Marshals (as had happened to Field Marshal Rommel).

The new Field Marshal Paulus, who was later forced to march with his "victorious" soldiers in the grandiose parade in Moscow, had quickly changed his opinion of Germany.

For us these days of mourning were days of joy, although our situation in itself had become even harder.

Stalingrad! Stalingrad!

"Perhaps" we would yet be liberated this year?

That was our first month of 1943.

XXVIII.

Our situation, which had grown very tense during all these events, began to calm down again.

The eight o'clock evening curfew was once again canceled, and it became easier for our people to enter the Reich Jewish ghetto.

In general, apathy prevailed. People didn't want to take responsibility for the future and lived only for the moment. Those who still had some money or other hidden valuables, or had earned any money, lived prodigally. People indulged themselves in whatever luxuries were available, and ate and drank the best.

On this subject I would like to emphasize that in other ghettos (Warsaw, Lodz, Vilno) there were two categories of people: the fed and the hungry. By contrast, in our ghetto nobody had to go hungry – we made sure of that.

It was a great blunder on the part of the young men to take everything they could get their hands on to the German women in the ghetto, for this convinced them that "the Latvians are rich, the Latvians have more than enough"! Through this kind of talk, which was repeated constantly, these views gradually filtered through to the people at the command headquarters, who naturally drew the logical conclusion.

During this period foreign Jews were also brought from the city into the ghetto (Gurwitsch). A large proportion of the foreign Jews were arrested in the city and taken to prison (see the chapter on the Terminal and Central Prisons). An Italian from the Orient Halvah Company, an Aryan, had to stay in the ghetto with his Jewish wife, though only for a short time.

The winter, which in contrast to the previous one was short and mild, nonetheless brought us many cares. The main problem was a great shortage of fuel. If we brought fuel into the ghetto it was taken away from us by the police, partly for themselves and partly for the bathhouse.

At the end of the winter there were great changes in our command headquarters. "Bloody" Krause disappeared and was replaced by Eddi (Eduard) Roschmann, who had a fairly low rank (*Unterscharführer*). He was said to come from Steiermark in Austria and to be a jurist by profession. When we heard this news, of course we all gave a sigh of relief, for naturally we expected that a man so well-educated, a jurist from a good family – in contrast to Krause,

the detective from Berlin* – would be incapable of committing the same crimes. Unfortunately, we were very much mistaken in this opinion.

Krause, who was a psychopath and a sadist, acted suddenly and spontaneously, handing down his verdicts without a detailed examination of the situation and executing them immediately; Roschmann, the jurist, deliberated for a long time, investigated thoroughly, and thus pulled more and more people down to their destruction. Because of his character he also especially enjoyed disentangling the very twisted threads of the weapons incident. Now, through him, a small and hardly noticeable fire developed into a brightly burning blaze that later claimed many, many victims.

In fact, Krause had not altogether disappeared from the ghetto. He was appointed *Kommandant* of the large Salaspils extermination camp, but he was still "temporarily" in the ghetto every day, gathering information about everything.

Roschmann delivered his first report of the day to Krause while the latter was still sitting in his car. Was Krause perhaps still partially responsible for the ghetto as well?

As soon as Krause entered the ghetto, the streets near Command Headquarters were blocked off by the police so that nothing unforeseen could happen.

Before Roschmann took over his position, Krause crowned his departure from the ghetto with renewed bloodshed. One winter evening the *Kommandant* left Command Headquarters, accompanied by his "Adjutant" Haar, and started walking toward our ghetto. This disturbed us at once, and we waited for the result of his visit. Soon it became clear that Krause had gone directly to 14 Viļānu Street and used hand grenades to murder the policeman Damski, who had hidden there. It remained a riddle to us how he had found out about Damski's hideout at all. Rumor had it that the German Jewish policemen were to blame.

While Damski was in hiding, his comrades had advised him either to look for a hiding place with Aryans in the city or to make contact with the partisans. He had not managed to do either of these things.

Right after his murder certain people were arrested, but they were soon released. Later the guards managed to arrest those comrades who had really helped him and hidden him. There were three men, including Herbert Machtus (a journalist for the newspaper "*Segodnia*") and Willy Kohn.

* [Ed.: Breslau]

Their stay in the ghetto prison was not long. A few days later they were led to the place of their *schchite* (execution). They made their last walk with their hands in chains, accompanied by Haar, Perl and others. Behind them walked the murderer Krause with his gun cocked.

The streets were blocked off, as was always done in such cases. According to the rumors, Machtus said to the Commandant at the wall of the Jewish cemetery, where the execution took place: "Bloodhound! Don't think that the Jewish people will be destroyed through our execution!" Then all three of them sang the "Hatikva". With our national hymn on their lips the martyrs went to their death.

The loss of Machtus and the others made a horrible impact on us. I myself had known Machtus for many years. At that time he was still a student in the Hasmonaea fraternity and was a very good friend of my relatives.

XXIX.

At first we heard practically nothing from the new *Kommandant*. There were some arrests but no executions – until one day he signed and carried out the death sentence against seven people. Now he had tasted blood, and his sadistic and murderous instincts emerged from this moment on, just as Krause's had.

Accompanied by his comrade Gymnich and his big dangerous dog, he often strolled through the ghetto unannounced. Entirely unexpectedly he entered apartments, inspected the kitchens and looked into the cooking pots. As soon as people heard he was walking through the ghetto they had to immediately throw into the latrine all the food they had laboriously gathered at so much risk.

On these walks he amused himself by shooting cats or pigeons with his gun. And if a bullet hit a Jew instead of a cat or a pigeon, that didn't matter to him!

He even monitored the hospital to see whether individual Jews really were "legally" excused from work. He dealt with the German ghetto in exactly the same way.

Only too often, the *Kommandant* and Gymnich were standing at the ghetto gate when the work crews returned. There they monitored us, beat us and frisked us. If even the smallest thing was found on one of us, that unfortunate individual was instantly sent to the bunker and from there to the cemetery wall.

As soon as the *Kommandos* approaching the gate saw the two murderers standing there, everyone simply threw away as soon as possible whatever he had on him in the way of food or money. Thus mountains of things that be-

longed to "nobody" piled up. They were collected by the German Jewish police, and nobody ever saw any of it again*.

The wounded SS men who could clearly see this happening from the windows of the Linas Hazedek hospital directly adjacent to the ghetto gate remembered the people who had thrown things away, in order to report them. Of course those who had been denounced then paid with their lives. This is what happened to two German women, for instance, who had hidden under their clothes two kilos of butter which they had acquired for their small children by trading. For this they were shot.

At this time Lewenstein (Lulow's son-in-law) was arrested at his work station for trading and was imprisoned for ever. Also at that time, the leader of the Knights' Hall work crew, Seligsohn, was brought half-dead from his workplace back to the ghetto. He died soon after that. The reason for his death was that he had been observed from the windows of General Jeckeln's residence speaking to a Russian prisoner of war.

Spring began, as always, with a selection of people to work in the peat-cutting satellite camps. The first group was sent to Sloka on 18 April. A large number of people, including my son and me, were in it. Alas, after 3 month** I came back alone. My son and two of his comrades were shot there (see the chapter "Bloody Sloka").

Peat-cutting work crews were also sent to Olaine, Plotzen and other places. *Kommandant* Roschmann paid visits everywhere. During one visit to Olaine he shot our comrade Karp and others on account of five eggs.

After the murder of my son I worked in the ghetto. At that time many teenagers and old and weak people who could not be recruited for any work were in the ghetto.

I proposed that a department for manufacturing rolls of blackout curtains be set up in the workshops of the Area Commissary. My intention was to occupy a few hundred people with this easy work. Wand supported my proposal strongly, because he saw in it a good opportunity to find an occupation for the old people.

Hofschowitsch, the head of all the workshops, also supported my proposal, but he was arrested a few days later, as I was about to start. Thereupon the Labor Authority proposed that I now take over the job of directing the workshops. The German Jew Baum had his eye on the same position. But our rep-

* [Ed.: On strict orders from Roschmann, all this food was delivered to the ghetto's hospital.]

** [Ed.: The Sloka *Kommando* came back to the ghetto in July.]

representative, Kassel, refused to permit a German to be the director in places where Latvian Jews worked. I declined the position, for under no circumstances did I want to have a leading position in the ghetto. Fortunately Hofschowitsch was released from prison a few weeks later, and I could then begin setting up my section of the blackout-curtain workshops in the Reich Jewish ghetto.

XXX.

Weapons in the Ghetto

The spark of October 1942 had become a huge fire. The twisted threads of the "weapons incident" began to disentangle themselves in June 1943.

The suspicion I had had earlier concerning my son, who had since then been murdered, was now confirmed. A casual remark he had made during that period – "We won't let ourselves be slaughtered like sheep any longer" – his constant secret meetings with his comrades, and his immediate disappearances after coming home from work – I thought of all this once again and filled the gaps in my suspicions.

I will now try to relate briefly to the reader everything I then knew about the "weapons incident".

In 1942 the lawyer Jewelsohn was working in the city at the Billeting Department, which was located in the public school behind Gunpowder Tower. Because he, like all of us, had our terrible destruction before his eyes daily, one day he started a conversation with his comrades about whether it would not be possible to create a resistance movement – because, he said, people couldn't just let themselves be slaughtered like animals any longer.

A circumstance that seemed to favor this plan tremendously was that just at that time Jews were working in Gunpowder Tower collecting the Germans' war spoils (weapons). None of the weapons in Gunpowder Tower were being registered.

No sooner said than done!

Fanatics turned up, and so did organizers. We could certainly count on the support and direct cooperation of our Jewish police. The senior policeman, Itzchok Bag (Wischkin), even took on the leadership of the whole movement. Small secret groups using passwords started to form, and they knew nothing about one another. Each group had a leader. I would like to expressly mention that not all of the policemen were in the movement or knew about it.

When the work camps were formed, Jewelsohn looked over the lists kept by Kassel, the man in charge of work assignments, in order to strike from the lists the people who were important for the ghetto. I found out later that Kölmann was not involved in the movement, but had known about it.

An excellently camouflaged bunker was set up at the corner of Viļānu and Lielā Kalna Streets to store the weapons. Its entrance was completely hidden: it was entered through an oven. People were even planning to dig an underground passage from there to the railroad. Marksmanship lessons were given in a large cellar in Līksnas Street. A blacksmith shop was located there, and during the shooting practice the two Lithuanian blacksmiths Hirsch Sagawalow and Mordechai Gamarnik had to beat the anvil especially hard.

I found out afterwards that at that time the Lithuanian Jew Wolf Kobrinski also walled up weapons in the cellar of the police headquarters in Līksna Street; they have not been found to this day.

Even extra food supplies were organized and stored in a ruined building next to Lauvas Street. Some of the weapons from Gunpowder Tower were smuggled into the ghetto by individuals, and some were brought in by our drivers in the food cartons, despite the Latvian guards.

Besides the members of the resistance movement, many other people acquired small weapons for themselves.

Unfortunately, on our visits to the German ghetto a careless word would sometimes slip out, or somebody or other might even show off a weapon (this was even done by people who were not in the resistance movement). Thus, even in *Kommandant* Krause's time, rumors about all these things very soon reached the Command Headquarters. Of course the latter began to take an interest in the matter and got the Gestapo involved.

In my opinion, the resistance put up by the Jewish boys on the Daugavpils road which cost the Jewish policemen and 106 other people their lives had nothing to do with the weapons incident, but of course it intensified the Gestapo's suspicions.

In the meantime the resistance movement lost strength because of

- (1) the death of the "Swedish" group, including the lawyer Jewelsohn and other comrades, and
- (2) the shooting of our policemen, including some especially capable and dedicated boys. Moreover, these policemen had had the best opportunities to bring in weapons.

Without paying any heed to these circumstances or to the further fact that the whole enterprise was at very great risk because of the German Jewish police,* the leader of the resistance movement at that time, Owsej Okun, did not give in but continued to organize.

He received tremendous assistance through the cooperation of the teacher Ilja Lat, the engineer Michelsohn and the mechanic Botwinkin.

As the reader already knows, two men had disappeared when the police force was liquidated. One of them (Damski) was shot by Krause and the other (Israelowitsch) left the ghetto with a work crew bound for the Jewish work camp at the Gestapo headquarters. There he found a hiding place with a family he knew, that of the decorator Rosenstein (husband, wife and son). Other helpers available to him were Stupel, Konrad Treister, Jakobsohn and his good friend Edith Kaufmann (from Berlin). For a short time he was hidden in the attic until a hiding place with two Aryan women in the city had been found.

It took a fairly long time for the Gestapo to get wind of the case and arrest him (people claimed that he had been betrayed by one of the two Aryan women, who had quarreled). All those who had helped him in the Gestapo work camp were also arrested and taken to prison. Except for Mrs. Kaufmann and Israelowitsch himself - both of whom were urgently needed for the interrogations concerning the weapons incident - all of them were killed.

Our new *Kommandant*, Roschmann, was particularly interested in the weapons incident, and he did not rest until he had found out everything. This was the reason why Krause came to the ghetto every day before driving on to Salaspils. On those occasions the two of them had long talks and the Russian Danilow-Milkowski was also included as an examining magistrate.

One day an older Jew, whose name I no longer remember, was arrested in the ghetto on Roschmann's orders. After entering the room of Police Chief Frankenberg, he asked permission to go to the latrine and disappeared. He hid in the Aryan-owned vinegar factory (next to Lauvas Street), but was later arrested and taken to the Gestapo. This incident was also connected with the weapons incident.

After some time, Israelowitsch was brought by Gestapo people from the prison to the ghetto. He was taken to a large empty square, and some Jews were seized and ordered to dig at a certain place pointed out by Israelowitsch. Evidently they hoped to find buried treasures. After that all of them went to

* [Ed.: There is absolutely no reason for this unfounded allegation by Kaufmann. His well known dislike for German Jews prompted his suspicions.]

the police station in Mazā Kalna Street. There, a stack of boards was moved aside and once again people searched for something. Finally the group went through a courtyard on Viļānu Street toward Lauvas Street. Here in a ruined building they found an excellently camouflaged hiding place where mattresses, distilled water, candles, petroleum, biscuits, canned food and other things had been stored. Besides, various valuables were also found bricked up into the walls.

Later the German Jewish police chief Perl discovered still more valuable objects in the same place and kept them for himself.

Israelowitsch was taken back to the prison. For a long time we heard nothing more about him. The whole weapons incident seemed to have petered out. The former policeman Goldberg (from the women's ghetto) was also brought out of prison and people once again dug in places that he pointed out. Apparently this enterprise too was connected with the weapons incident.

At this time the *Kommandant* paid a visit to Lielā Kalna Street. It turned out that as soon as he came into view four young people fled from one of the houses and disappeared. The *Kommandant*, who had seen this, ordered the police to bring these four persons to him at any cost and set a certain deadline. He guaranteed the fugitives their freedom. The young men presented themselves and were in fact released. But a short time later they were separately arrested and taken away. They were never seen again in the ghetto. Among them was a fourteen-year-old boy named Dolgitzer. After a few months a series of arrests of the resistance movement's members began.

The work crews returning to the ghetto were waited for at the gate and individuals were selected out of them.

It turned out that a list had existed on which only family names had been noted. For this reason, all of the members of a given family were always taken out of the work crews.

On one of these occasions a certain Boris Freidberg was also arrested, but he managed to flee. Thereupon the ghetto was placed under a state of emergency. Under these circumstances the men's access to the Latvian women's ghetto and to the German ghetto was barred. These measures were also connected with the weapons incident.

The next morning a printed announcement of the *Kommandant* was posted on the streets. It bore a signature and read as follows:

"It is necessary to interrogate the Jew Boris Freidberg from the Latvian ghetto concerning a certain matter. But he is in hiding. If he voluntarily presents himself by 20 hours tomorrow evening, nothing will happen to

him; his freedom is guaranteed. If he does not, he will be regarded as a deserter and hanged because of his action. The same punishment will be dealt out to his accomplices."

Of course people did not trust the *Kommandant's* reassurances, so they doubted whether Freidberg would appear voluntarily and put himself into the murderers' hands. The situation in the ghetto was extremely tense. People told each other that behind the Freidberg affair there was definitely something more serious that would end with a new "*Aktion*" in the ghetto.

Hours passed, but the fugitive did not appear.

A few minutes before the deadline, the sought-for Freidberg turned up on Līksnas Street, swaying, his eyes bulging out.

The German Jewish police took him by the arms and brought him to the Command Headquarters. At this time I happened to be standing at the window of my room, which was across the street from the Command Headquarters. It took only a few minutes for several vehicles containing Gestapo people to reach the ghetto. Among them was Danilow, wearing civilian clothes. They immediately sent for Dr. Aufrecht, who was ordered to keep the "murderer" alive no matter what. This effort was successful, and Freidberg was interrogated far into the night. Finally Freidberg took the poison that had been set before him during the several days of his imprisonment, but he remained alive.

The next morning the house in which the weapons had been hidden was surrounded by a cordon of SS people; other SS men stood outside the ghetto fence. High-ranking Gestapo officers drove to the spot in their vehicles with the *Kommandant*. The German Jewish police, their chief, and the ghetto elder Leiser were also present. Because the work crews had already marched away, the ghetto was totally empty. They began to take the weapons out of the secret bunker. The inhabitants of this house, as well as Owsej Okun, were arrested. Okun was taken to the prison by Roschmann himself. On the way there Okun tried to kill the *Kommandant* with a razor blade, and a struggle ensued in which Roschmann was wounded on the face. For some time after that he wore a bandage on his head.

I waited impatiently at my workplace – at that time it was at 66 Ludzas Street – to see from the window the returning cars. At last a large truck appeared, accompanied by Gymnich. It was full of weapons and some boxes. I observed that the weapons were in very good condition, new and freshly oiled. The truck stopped in front of the Command Headquarters, where Gymnich exchanged a few words with Dr. Aufrecht as he walked by. As they talked, Aufrecht picked up a weapon in his hand and laughed sarcastically. A short time

later the others also arrived; they had cameras and took pictures of everything. Soon after that, Roschmann walked around with a picture of the bunker and the weapons. Roschman said this photograph, documenting the "great discovery", would be sent to Berlin. There our fate would be decided.

Another blockade was imposed on the ghetto's entrances, and a new series of arrests followed. In the next few days Asia Raizin and his neighbor Botwinkin were arrested at their work station. At the same time police arrested the teacher Lat and the blacksmith Sagalow at the Technical Authority and two shoemakers who worked elsewhere. They were taken by car to the prison with their hands chained behind their backs. Before these people were arrested at their work stations a thorough search was carried out.

In the mornings, when the work crews were going to work, the police simply pulled people out of the marching rows according to a list. Later these people were taken to the prison as a group. The apartments of the arrested people were sealed by Police Chief Frankenberg. When he entered Botwinkin's apartment at 55 Ludzas Street, he found there Eljaschewitsch, Botwinkin's comrade from the Technical Authority, trying to destroy telltale traces. Frankenberg arrested him immediately, for ever. We did not forget this behavior of our police chief and of people similar to him. When he arrived at the Buchenwald concentration camp, people made very sure that he was the first one to go through the ovens.

Besides the searches in the city, people were also arrested in the peat-cutting' satellite camps. One victim was even specially brought in from Estonia, where he was working at the time.

The weapons incident cost us several hundred people; they were the remainder of our best young people. Nobody came back from the prisons (see the chapter on the Central and Terminal Prisons).

We heard from the prison that Israelowitsch and his girlfriend were separated from the other Jews there. They were forced to stand behind a grille and identify each individual as he was being led to be interrogated.

Only after the end of the entire weapons incident were Israelowitsch and his girlfriend killed.

It is said that Tscharle Kohn (a cardboard manufacturer) was also very actively involved in this incident. He managed to save himself, but died later in *Kaiserwald*.

Among the Jews who were arrested and later executed, I would like to mention the three Pommeranz brothers, one of whom died in the police *Aktion* and the other two in the weapons incident.

They were men of the people (*amcho*), craftsmen by trade. They had little education, but they had great Jewish hearts. They helped their unfortunate brothers whenever they could, took care of the women and little children, risked their lives and brought people food which they distributed for free. One of them worked in the slaughterhouse, where he got a little milk from the cows before they were slaughtered so that he could bring it to our small children in the ghetto.

Bubi Kramer, a doctor's son, who had himself studied medicine in Switzerland, was a leading figure of the underground movement. Being a work crew leader of the SSP (sanitation collection point) commando, he was the one who organized the systematic acquisition of medicine. Later on his commando was quartered in the prison of the old citadel through his efforts. Here he organized the necessary medicine for the underground movement and went back to the ghetto himself to support it.

Owsej Okun, who is already familiar to the reader, was born in Daugavpils and was part-owner of the Zweier and Frischer textile company.

Ilia Lat, well-known in Riga as a teacher in the Hebrew school, later worked in the Technical Authority of the ghetto.

We will always cherish their memory and that of all the others who died.

Some of their names are:

Amikuschanski	Lat, Ilia
Becker	Liebermann
Berlin, Meier	Lewi, H.
Botwinkin	Lewi, Israel
Zuckermann	Lewin, Nochum
Dannemann	Moisesch (teacher)
Eljaschewitsch	Okun, Owsej
Firk	Orelowitz, Scholem
Fischelsohn, A.	Ospowat
Fischelsohn, Ch.	Pitel, Rafail
Freidberg, Boris	Polonski, Hirsch
Ginsburg, Boris, Dr.	Pommeranz brothers
Gor, Hirsch	Raizin, Asia
Sagawalow	
Gordin, Monia	Stein, Israel
Harrik	Steinbock, Sascha
Jozin, Hirsch	Wassermann

Klempmann
Kramer, Bubi
and others.

Winnik, Ch.

XXXI.

The desperate situation in the ghetto did not last long. Shortly after all of those arrested because of the resistance movement had been taken off to prison, including those from the barracks camps, the blockade in the ghetto was lifted and thus "normal" life resumed.

At this time a Jew who was arrested in Valdemāra Street in the city center used a gun to resist arrest. For this, the arrested man's whole work crew of eleven people was thrown into prison, together with their column leader Lippert (from Liepāja).

Three women from Kovno who had traded in chickens and gold were also shot in the ghetto.

A young fellow named Joelsohn from Daugavpils worked in the commando at the SS field hospital. Because he had made contact with the partisans, he was arrested. Before being seized, he too tried to shoot his attackers with a gun and killed some of them.

In the meantime we had a small celebration in the ghetto. A *brith* (circumcision ceremony) was held in secret at the Kovno rabbi's apartment. My acquaintance Anja Gerber had also given birth to a child, but on the commander's orders the baby was given a lethal injection.

There were arrests in the German ghetto too. In this case it was some women who had had close relationships with Aryans and had also written letters to their homeland. In the meantime the Hanover group's elder Fleischel, a Jew of the Roman Catholic faith, had died. His funeral was quite impressive, for he was the only Jew to receive a coffin.*

The Jews who had come from Kovno visited their relatives in the ghetto every Sunday, coming in groups from their satellite camp at Spilve. Some of the Kovno people were also sent to the barracks camp at Spilve from the ghetto.

News came from the city that the Latvians had set up an SS legion commanded by the Latvian general Bangerskis to support the Germans.

* [Ed.: Fleischel died in September 1943, at a time when the ghetto was already half empty.]

Attempts to flee were made repeatedly. We heard that there had also been a great uprising in the Warsaw ghetto which was connected with the ghetto's liquidation (the removal of its inhabitants).*

And now it was our turn: according to a posted announcement, the ghetto was to be liquidated and concentration camps were to be built. The German Jews, as well as many of our Latvian Jews, saw a connection between this order and the weapons incident. But this was not the case, because this was a plan designating the Riga concentration camp for the Baltic countries as a whole, which had been worked out a long time ago in Berlin. Riga itself was the first ghetto to be emptied, and the others were to follow.

The departure of the first transports to Kaiserwald in July 1943 and the news we received from there very soon afterwards created a sense of desperation and even panic in the ghetto. So Max Leiser, the ghetto elder, convened a general assembly to calm down his coreligionists and give them a more detailed explanation. The assembly was held in the courtyard of the "Prague building". We Latvian Jews attended this meeting as a group. Leiser spoke in the name of "*Herr Kommandant*" as well as for himself, saying that the "powers that be" were dealing "very leniently" with us in view of all that had happened, and that some of us would be sent to Kaiserwald and other newly built camps.

About *Kaiserwald* he said: "Kaiserwald is neither a Paradise nor a Hell." (Here I would like to mention that I later reminded our ghetto representative of these words of his in the Stutthof concentration camp.) He added that he hoped everything would in time become better at *Kaiserwald*.

In the name of the *Kommandant* he told us that if the number of fugitives from the ghetto continued to increase – as it had been doing recently, especially from the Latvian ghetto – three relatives or neighbors of each individual fugitive would be arrested in their stead.

In the meantime, the first victims had arrived from *Kaiserwald* for admission to the ghetto hospital. Their appearance and their clothes shocked everyone. But the transports to the satellite camps continued, and everyone tried to avoid being sent to *Kaiserwald*. Finally new satellite camps were built and the old ones were enlarged.

As I thought over the difficult situation, I decided to have myself assigned to a satellite camp in the city if at all possible. I managed fairly soon to be assigned to the Billeting Department, and until the final liquidation of the ghetto I only entered it two more times.

* [Ed.: April, 1943]

A small group of Jews had been taken to Estonia to clear the front there of mine fields. The members of this group had been taken out of the bunker; they included Klein (from Auce), who had been arrested after a wedding ring had been found on him.

Because young people who were then in prison could be traded for older people and sick people, our Latvian Jewish ghetto leaders drew up for the first time a list of more than twenty-eight people they thought could be traded. This was not done out of malice but only to prevent even greater evil from happening. The list included Seligsohn, Galler (from "Segodnia"), Schlossberg, Seli-onker, Lemkin and Stoller.

I would like to add a few words about Lemkin. A cinema entrepreneur, he had made contact with the Pērkoņkrusts organization as early as 1938. In the ghetto we already thought he was insane, but we tried to get rid of him nonetheless. The trade now made this possible, and he died as a result. His two brothers, who were also in the ghetto, were very decent and worthy men. In the meantime, another ghetto inhabitant had truly gone insane. He walked around all day wearing *tfilim* (religious implements) and reading prayers from a prayer book. After his arrest he was first taken to the bunker and then to the cemetery wall.

On the Day of Atonement a large transport arrived from the Liepāja ghetto, including the ghetto's representatives, the lawyer Kaganski and Israelit. The new arrivals were quartered in Viļānu Street in the ghetto, which was already half-empty.

At that time a German Jewish emigrant named Kohn turned up among those released from prison. People said of him that he was involved in dubious dealings everywhere. He came to a bad end. The small number of work *Kommandos* who still lived in the ghetto had to march to work in the city until the last moment.

The transport to the concentration camp came soon, as did the day of the general liquidation of the ghetto.

XXXII.

On 2 November 1943 the ghetto came to an end. In the morning, while the few work crews were on their way to work, Ukrainian and Russian *wlasowcy* (volunteer soldiers) moved into the ghetto. They surrounded the entire complex, and the Jews were driven out of all the houses into the streets. The same thing happened to the sick people, who were simply dragged out of the hospital without the slightest concern for their condition. All the women and chil-

dren had to leave their apartments without taking their things with them, and were beaten besides. Then everyone was driven together into the streets, and the houses were searched to see if anyone had hidden in them.

Now high-ranking Gestapo officers, who had carried out the entire *Aktion* under the direction of "*Herr Kommandant*" and Dr. Lange, the Commander of the Security Service, began to sort the people who had been assembled. It was said that Lange was in the best of spirits on this occasion. His jokes consisted of calling out to the weak and ill people: "Faster, faster to Palestine! Cast a last look at your weapons warehouse!" and similar remarks.

In the sorting process, some people were sent to stand in line on the left and others to stand on the right.

"*Mi lchaim umi lamowes?*" (Who is going to live, who to die?)

The *Kommandant* looked into each person's face. Those he didn't like were sent to the left (that is, they were selected for the other world). Of course all the older people, children and teenagers had to go to the left. Thus several thousand people were selected, and they were sent in heavily guarded trucks to the railroad station. From there they were sent to the notorious Treblinka extermination camp in Poland.* Among these pitiable people were Professor Metz, Professor Gurwitsch, the lawyer Grey and others.

Those who remained were sent, group by group, to the Kaiserwald concentration camp and other satellite camps (Strazdumuiža, HKP, Spilve, ABA and so on).

Only a clean-up commando led by Hofschowitsch remained in a house that was part of the area commissary in the ghetto (at 66 Ludzas Street). It included sixty people, including Dr. B. Jakobsohn, Dr. Kretzer, Funkelstein, Brandt, Vogel and others.** Later, when this group had to be moved to the concentration camp, Funkelstein escaped. Vogel also disappeared suddenly, which meant he had been killed.

My liquidated Billeting Department *Kommando*, including me, was quartered in the women's ghetto after the ghetto had been dispersed, since everything was already closed down there. The whole ghetto looked terrible; the streets were full of things that had been thrown out of the apartments.

Two days later we were taken to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp (see the chapter on *Kaiserwald*).

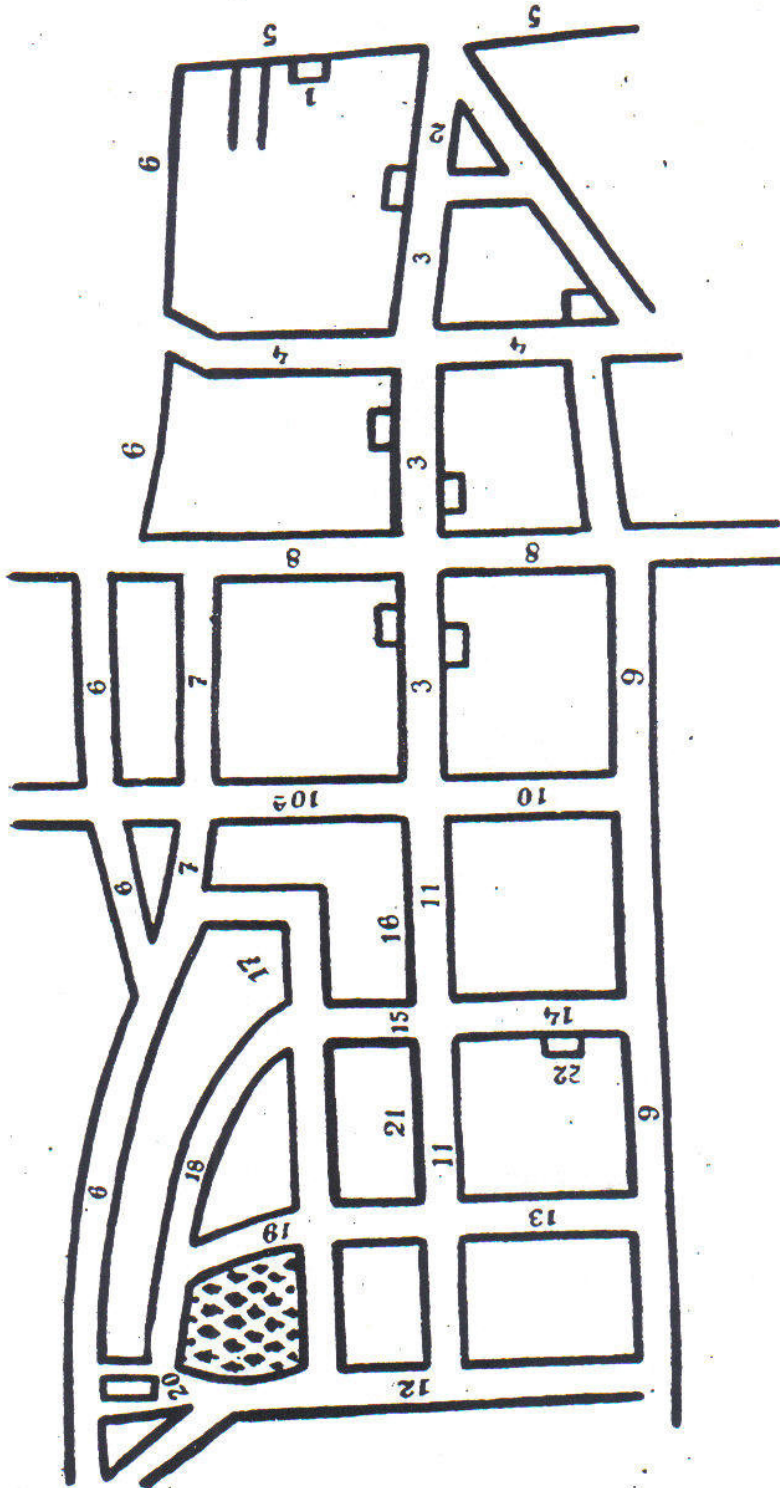
* [Ed.: The transport arrived in Auschwitz 3 days later. Only 700 persons were still alive. Of them, two German Jews survived the war.]

** [A day or two after the ghetto's liquidation, another group of people were brought there for the clean-up, among them many women from the former German ghetto.]

During these final days, our ghetto representative Wand died a mysterious death. He was found murdered in a cellar at the corner of Liksnas and Ludzas Streets. It was said that his death was connected with the police incident.

After 702 days the ghetto's existence was over.

They had been 702 blood - soaked days!



PLAN OF THE RIGA GHETTO

Explanation to the Plan of the Riga Ghetto

1. Judenrat (Jewish Committee) in the Large Riga Ghetto
2. Ghetto Gate
3. Sadovnika Street
4. Katolus Street
5. Laplesa Street
6. Moscow Steet
7. Jersika Street
8. Daugavpils Street
9. Grosse (Great) Berg Street
10. Kleine (Small) Berg Street
- 10a. Wiener* Street
11. Ludzas Street
12. Lauva Street
13. Vilanu Street
14. Liksnas Street
15. Prager Tor (Prague Gate)
16. Kommandantur (Headquarters)
- 17 Blechplatz (Steelplate Place)
18. Koelner Street
19. Bielefelder Street
20. Alter jüdischer Friedhof (Old Jewish Cemetery)
21. Frauenghetto (Women's Ghetto)
22. Judenrat im kl. Ghetto (Jewish Committee in the Small Ghetto)

* [Ed.: Berliner Street]

Part II

The "Zentralka" and "Terminka" Prisons of Riga

The Central and Terminal Prisons were the two large Riga prisons within whose walls many thousands of Jews came to a tragic end in the course of three years. Besides these, which were not large enough, the so-called juvenile prison at the corner of Matīsa and Krišjāņa Barona Streets was used for a short time as an annex. The Terminal Prison was only for women, so initially only men were put into the Central Prison. Toward the end, after the liquidation of the Jewish women in the Terminal Prison, women were also brought to the Central Prison. In both prisons the Jews were separated from the Aryans and had their own wards.

According to the records, about 7,000 Jews were taken to the Central Prison in the first eleven days after the enemy's occupation of Riga. During the same period 1,500 women were taken to the Terminal Prison. Because the Latvians, directed by their murderous staff headquarters on Valdemāra Street, were constantly sending new people into the prisons, a whole group of prisoners was removed as early as the night of 4 July 1941 and "sent to work" in order to make space. They never came back. On 8 July 1941 the Latvians loaded about 775 men from the Central Prison into large trucks. They were driven to the Biķernieki forest. There they were ordered to line up in rows of three. Every third man was pulled out and shot on the spot. The remaining men had to bury the dead in the graves that had already been dug for them. After that they were taken back to prison. This *Aktion* claimed the lives of many prominent Riga personalities (Widser, Katz, Gurewitsch, Preiss and others). The Latvian Ozols (from the Second Police Precinct) gave this *Aktion* particularly strong support. Later, between 800 and 1,000 people were taken away every night, and they did not return to the prison. The murders were committed not only in the Biķernieki forest but also in Jugla, in the woods around Baltezers (White Lake).

The doctors who were brought to the Central Prison were locked up in a special cell and initially they were not sent either to work or to be liquidated.

A large number of women who had gradually filled up the Terminal Prison were told they would be put to work in a juvenile reform colony in Irlava. But in reality they, like the men, were taken in groups directly to the Biķernieki forest and to White Lake in Jugla and gruesomely murdered there. They were taken away early in the morning in the familiar blue city buses. Other women

who put up resistance, for example Dr. Magalif's wife, who was very strong, were beaten ruthlessly. Later, at their place of execution, they had to strip naked and were then shot and thrown half-dead into the graves. The murderers kept the clothes and valuables of both the women and the men for themselves. I later found out that the Latvian Manfreds Liepiņš played an active role in this "women's action". Latvian women also worked in the prison (Ozoliņa, Markēviča, Vītola).

During the first few days a Jewish child was born in the Terminal Prison, and it was later named Terminka. The mother was allowed to stay in prison for only a short time; then she too was sent to be liquidated. The Latvian women kept the child in the prison. I heard of all this through Mrs. Markēviča, and so I sent food and children's clothing to the prison the whole time for the little one. I also tried to help many prominent women, but only a fraction of the things I brought reached them. As soon as a Jewish Committee was created I told its chairman, the lawyer Michail Eljaschow, about little Terminka. He went to a great deal of trouble to find a place for her in the ghetto. Unfortunately, not only her years but also her months were numbered, for she was killed in the first large-scale action.

The records show clearly that nobody was registered in the prisons until 11 July 1941; for this reason the number of people who were killed could not be reconstructed. Until 11 July 1941 the only prison warders were the Latvians. They alone were responsible for all the murders of the thousands of men and women that were committed until that time, for they acted entirely on their own initiative.

None of the female inmates of the Terminal Prison could save themselves, but in the Central Prison some men in addition to the aforementioned doctors survived beyond 11 July 1941. Some of them were assigned as specialists to do various kinds of work. After the Germans had taken over control of the prisons, all the prisoners were registered. Unfortunately, the number of Jews had already diminished drastically by that time, but with the help of the Latvians it was once again increased. The actual warders of the prisons were now the SD (the Gestapo's Security Service). Many Latvians worked together with them.

The Research Department for the Jews was in the hands of the Gestapo officer Alexei Danilow-Milkowski and Lieutenant Colonel Zariņš. The notorious, cruel Gestapo methods were used. When the Germans took control of the prisons, no actions were carried out initially; the people simply died of starvation. The daily ration consisted of 120 grams of bread and a bowl of hot watery soup. The doctors, about forty in number, now were forced to load coal at the

Škirotava railroad station, but after that they were released. This was the reason why many of our doctors remained in the ghetto and the concentration camp, but unfortunately only a few of them survived.

In the meantime, the prison gradually filled up with Jews who had simply been arrested on the street for various "sins" (because they were not wearing their stars, and so on). Even Jewish members of the Red Army, including high-ranking officers, were put into prison (Nowosjolok, for instance). Sick and wounded men were dragged directly from the army field hospitals into cells, where they then lay without treatment until they died. After the liquidation of the ghetto it was the turn of the "baptized" Jews (the Kalabus family and others) and those who had been living with Aryan identity papers (the lawyer A. Blankenstein and others). For a long time Blankenstein wore a crucifix in prison, but this did him no good at all. Foreign Jews with passports from Persia (Gluchowski), Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and the USA were also imprisoned, together with their wives and children. They too were killed. Even the aforementioned "Swedish group" (the lawyer Jewelsohn, Dr. Freidmann, F. Sacharow and others), who had tried to escape to Sweden and were betrayed at the last moment by an SD man, were put into prison. Folia Sacharow and the policeman Bruno Goldberg, who was a familiar figure in the ghetto, were separately imprisoned for a long time in a veritable cage. Later on they were killed.

After the large-scale "weapons incident" in the ghetto, many people were taken to prison from the ghetto and from their place of work. These were the last and best of our young people. My comrade Dreier, who had been saved by chance, told me that after even a short time in prison he had not recognized people any more. They had long beards and could barely stand upright. Every day dysentery killed a huge number of people, but there was no help for it.

At this time the prominent industrialist Niemirowski was also in prison, and he was saved by an accident. The only Jew who lay in the prison infirmary for more than a year was the mentally deranged lawyer Liebesmann. To get bread, the Jews sold their last possessions to the prison guards, and for this reason they walked about dressed only in their underwear. Everyone tried to survive by any possible means. One day it was announced that if anyone had buried valuables in the ghetto and would voluntarily surrender them, he would be released from prison. Those who volunteered were driven with Gestapo people into the ghetto to dig up the *malines* (hiding places). Many valuables were dug up and handed over; but this was of no use at all, for nobody was released for doing so. The only lucky one to be released was the rag merchant Dubrow, but

finally he too was killed in the Strazdumiža action. As for the rest, the more or less strong people were taken out of prison and sent in groups to the notorious *Stützpunkt* or to the front to clear minefields. None returned, for all of them were killed.

In September 1944 the Aryan prisoners were evacuated to Germany on a steamship, but the Jews who still remained were killed without exception.

The graves of the numerous dead are located, together with those of the people murdered in the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp, next to the wall of the Christian Matīsa cemetery across from the Central Prison.

The Press in Riga During the German Occupation

Just after the German occupation of Riga, the Latvians published various flyers. At the same time they decided to publish a permanent daily newspaper in Latvian called "*Tēvija*" (Fatherland). It was printed in Blaumaņa Street in the large and prominent Brīva Zeme printing house, which had been founded by Dr. Ulmanis. This newspaper was written according to the pattern set by the old Latvian newspaper "*Jaunākās Ziņas*" (The Latest News), with the difference that it was 100% German and National Socialist in its viewpoint. Every day, "apprentices" of the notorious anti-Semite Julius Streicher – who has now been hanged in Nuremberg – harangued the public with new tirades against the Jews. The Editor-in-Chief was Kowalewsky. The Jewish question took up a great deal of space in this newspaper, and the Talmud was quoted constantly. All kinds of things were published in the form of pamphlets. One of them announced that the leaders of the Jewish community, Mordechai Dubin and Rabbi Nurock, had been arrested and killed by the Russians, which was not the case.

It was said that in early 1942 Editor-in-Chief Kowalewsky traveled together with the head of the Propaganda Department Rietums and the Latvian Captain Krečmanis to see Hitler in order to thank him for liberating Latvia from the Jews.

Initially only a so-called front newspaper was published by the Germans. It dealt mainly with military matters, but now and then it also made digs at the Jews. Then the "*Allgemeine deutsche Zeitung im Ostland*" (General German Newspaper in Ostland) was set up. This was a newspaper with a larger format and it was printed in the printing house of the "*Rigasche Rundschau*" (Riga Panorama) in Cathedral Square. Here too, there was no lack of Streicher's "apprentices", and the Jewish question was discussed intensively. There was

also a Russian newspaper founded by staff members of the old "*Tschornaja Sotnia*" (Black Newspaper). The notorious Leri (Klopotowsky) worked very actively for this newspaper. It too was very preoccupied with the Jewish question. It was printed in the printing house of the old "*Segodnia*" newspaper. Here too they printed various appeals to the Russian population in those parts of Russia that had not yet been occupied by the Germans; the flyers were dropped from airplanes. I remember one flyer addressed to the population of the city of Leningrad that was supposed to be distributed there after the occupation. But there was never an occupation, and the flyers stayed in Riga.

Besides these daily newspapers, various brochures and whole albums of propagandistic pictorial materials concerning the Soviet Union and the Jews were printed in Latvian. The authors wrote quite openly that they would not rest until the last Jew in Latvia had been exterminated.

But history decided otherwise!

Jumpravmuiža (Jungfernhof)

This place is not well-known; even we old inhabitants of Riga hardly knew of its existence. It cannot be found on the map. The only ones who really got to know it are the few remaining Jews from Germany and Austria, and they will never forget it. The Jumpravmuiža estate is located about five kilometers from Riga and used to belong to a German baron. Three kilometers from this estate lies the notorious Rumbula, the place where the German and Latvian murderers committed their crimes against Latvian Jewry.

After World War I (1914–1918) only two half-ruined houses and a barn remained standing in Jumpravmuiza. In the ghetto period some barracks were built there. Some of the people in the *Kommandos* who were forced to work for the ghetto there mysteriously disappeared.

"The Latvians laid the groundwork": that is what the chief murderer, General Jeckeln, said at his trial in Riga on 5 February 1946. But it was the Germans who really made use of the groundwork laid by the Latvians. They were the ones who started to transport Jews from Germany, Austria and other countries to Riga in order to exterminate them.

The next transport, on 3 December 1941, came from Nuremberg and Würzburg (in Bavaria).

On 4 December 1941 another transport arrived from Stuttgart and its surroundings (Württemberg). It included mainly children aged six and older, but also older people between 40 and 60 years of age. The others who had remained in Württemberg had been promised that their transport would follow. Thus entire families were separated. On 8 December 1941 a large transport from Hamburg arrived, which included many pregnant women. Reports show that later some more transports arrived and then disappeared without a trace. People say that these were taken to the notorious Biķernieki forest in the middle of the night and executed there.

On 15 January 1942, after a long pause, another large transport consisting of older men and women arrived from Vienna; then at the end of 1942 the last collective transport of men, women and children of various ages arrived. These transports arrived in fast trains at the Sķirotava station in Riga and were driven in trucks from there to Jumpravmuiža. Still other transports of German, Austrian and Czech Jews were sent either to the ghetto, which had been emptied by the extermination of the Latvian Jews, or directly to the forest to be executed there.*

The deported German and Austrian Jews had a great deal of valuable luggage with them and were well-dressed; they had been forced to take all their possessions with them. They had also been promised that their luggage would follow them to the camp in which they were settled.

But in fact this luggage was immediately carted away by the Gestapo. Moreover, it was announced at the railroad station that everyone had to hand over his or her valuables; failure to obey this order would be punished by death. For this reason, most of those in the first transport from Vienna, largely con-

* [Ed.: As was pointed out earlier, at the time Kaufmann worked on his opus in 1945 and 1946, he had very few records available to present a picture of events in the German Ghetto. As far as Jungfernhof was concerned, the very first transport came from Berlin. The German transport, with the exception of 50 young men, was murdered, as were their Latvian brethren. The young men came to the dilapidated estate, and were soon sent to Salaspils, charged with the erection of a new camp for future arrivals from the Reich.

In the meantime, several more transports came to Jungfernhof. On December 2, a transport from Nuremberg arrived, on December 5, a transport from Stuttgart arrived, on December 7, a transport from Vienna arrived and on December 9, a transport from Hamburg arrived. On January 15, 1942, a Viennese transport meant for the ghetto, was divided. 700 of the arrivals came to Jungfernhof, the other 300 or so were permitted to enter the ghetto, joining transports from Cologne, Kassel, Bielefeld, Hanover, Theresienstadt, Berlin, Dortmund, Vienna, Leipzig, and Duesseldorf.

Thus, between November 30, 1941, and February 10, 1942, over 20,000 Jews from the Reich arrived in Riga. Of them, approximately 1,000 survived.]

sisting of older people, were already executed just behind Jumpravmuiža, because valuables had been found in their possession.

Now thousands of men, women and children were quartered in rooms that could hold at most a few hundred people. In the barracks and stalls that had been prepared for the "guests", bunk beds were stacked six or eight high. Unfortunately it was extremely cold during just this period, and hundreds of people froze to death every day. So countless people were carried every day into the notorious "death barrack" and buried or cremated. The sick people were dealt with on Saturdays in the forest; that is, they were killed.

In February 1942, 200 women* were sent to the Riga ghetto and 600 men to the terrible Salaspils extermination camp. The women who survived by chance and are still alive today can be counted easily (Mrs. Springenfeld, Mrs. Kaplan)**; all the others were killed. On 26 March 1942 there was a "large-scale action" called the "Daugavgrīvas cannery". The inmates were told they were to work in this cannery. In fact, thousands were killed in the action. We know in precise detail that this "action" was carried out in the Biķernieki forest with the help of the Latvians. Afterwards only 300*** people remained of the total number of Jews who had been brought to Jumpravmuiža (about 6,500**** people). The 450 were forced to do special farm labor for the Gestapo. The leaders of all these actions were the notorious SD men and murderers Richard Nickel (from Berlin) and Rudi Seck, who displayed the most bestial instincts. Murdering human beings was child's play for them. The notorious murderer and Gestapo chief Dr. Lange was a very frequent guest in Jumpravmuiža. Thus German and Austrian Jews died martyrs' deaths in a Riga suburb, bloody Jumpravmuiža. Incidentally, Latvian "volunteers" played the largest role in all the *Aktionen* and the guard duty.

The fate of us Riga Jews is also bound up with Jumpravmuiža. Before our evacuation from Riga (the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp) to Germany a so-called "potato *Kommando*" of 70 men was sent to Jumpravmuiža. It included very prominent Riga Jews such as Sascha Misroch, Grischa Genkin, Legow, Max Fainsohn, Miletzki and others, as well as some from Kovno and Vilno. I was also chosen for this *Kommando*. However, because it turned out that 72 people were available for this *Kommando*, a Riga tailor named Schermann and

* [Ed.: from Jungfernhof]

** [Ed.: also Fritzi Bottwin, Vienna. She survived.]

*** [Ed.: 450]

**** [Ed.: 4,514]

I were put back in line. At first I was very unhappy about this. I believed that because I was being taken to the *Kaiserwald* camp as a hostage it would be very dangerous for me to stay there. I did everything possible to get into the "potato *Kommando*" although it already had enough people, but I did not succeed. Later, however, it turned out that the "potato *Kommando*" had been taken to Jumpravmuiža and forced to work at the notorious Rumbula *Stützpunkt*, where 32,000 men, women and children of the Riga ghetto had been killed. They worked in chains and their work consisted of cremating corpses and removing all traces of the murders. The whole *Kommando* itself was killed there. – Thus I was saved only through a marvelous coincidence.

Kworim weinen (Graves Weep)

The old Jewish cemetery had already seen many generations. A few years before World War II it was closed and a new one came in its stead.

The broad branches of centuries-old trees protected its *kworim* (graves) with their rich and splendid gravestones.

Tall, completely wild grass grew over earlier graves. The only person who remained faithful to the old cemetery was the ancient *kworesman* (gravedigger) R. Chaim. On holidays the old cemetery still sometimes had visitors. Then the Jews who lived nearby would gather there to pray in the small temple or visit their relatives' graves on the anniversaries of their deaths. Otherwise the old Bet Hakworois was *farjosemt* (abandoned).

Only when the Germans arrived did it come to life again. It was the Germans who dragged Jews into the prayer house, not to pray but to be burned alive.

Thus the prayer house disappeared, as did the old *kworesman* R. Chaim.

A new *tkufa* (era) had begun.

The old Jewish gravediggers of Riga were "lucky", because the old Jewish cemetery was integrated into the ghetto. Thus it became part of the ghetto and was awakened to new life.

Initially it had to accommodate only individuals. This phase lasted until the "ten bloody days".

But then the number of the dead rose not merely into the hundreds but into the thousands. It became crowded for all the victims, whose number increased every day.

The graves were dug deep, very deep. Each body was placed directly above the last one.

In addition, there were also completely new guests, guests from abroad – that is, the German Jews.

The number of the living was still large, but only a few of them were to survive, and thus it became necessary to make room.

A solution was found: the graves of the old Jewish Riga were destroyed so that new *kworim* could be dug in their place.

On a dark night in 1942 a loud and unfamiliar sound startled me out of my sleep.

Had something new happened? Did the murderers now want to kill all of us at once?

I listened hard, went to the window, and heard that the noise was coming from the direction of the cemetery. Then it quieted down again. I lay down and tried to go to sleep once more. But I couldn't, and I shifted from one side to the other.

Suddenly a new detonation and a bright flash came from the cemetery!

What had happened? The enemy had blown up the graves with dynamite and thus destroyed our "old Hereafter".

I wept to myself quietly so as not to wake my child, who was sleeping next to me and had worked hard the day before.

I saw my mother's face before me. Weeping, she turned to me and said: "Oh, my only child who is still alive, pity me! Our enemies give me no rest even in the grave! *Bet rachmim*, cry out to the Lord! *Habet min haschomain urej...!* (Look down from Heaven and see!)"

The cemetery was blown up on three successive nights, and each time I felt as though a piece of my heart was being torn out.

Kworim weinen...kworim weinen...

The old, overgrown cemetery wall had lost its function, for it had stopped separating this life from the one beyond. How many tales this silent witness of our great tragedy could tell! It is spattered everywhere with the blood of our martyrs. Our best people were shot against it.

It had heard the whistle of the fatal bullets and the singing of our "Hatikva". Our brothers and sisters died with this hymn on their lips!

Art in the Riga Ghettos and Concentration Camps

From the moment the Germans occupied Riga, as well as later on in the initial phase of the ghetto, art lay completely dormant. All of us were so full of cares that we had no thoughts left for it. But after a time, when everything had calmed down and ghetto life began to stabilize, a measure of vitality flowed back into art and culture. This is a law of nature.

The readers of this book, especially those who themselves lived in the ghetto at that time, will probably be surprised to see me begin this section about art with the name of Mapu.

Mapu, a poor boy from Kovno, was transported with others from that city to the Riga ghetto. Completely penniless and in rags, he now went from house to house performing his "art".

He had no voice to speak of, only a great deal of expressiveness. And with this talent and his Kovno ghetto songs, which he had brought with him, he moved all of us to tears. His "*Azoi mus sein, azoi mus sein*" (It has to be, it has to be) and similar songs have remained in my memory just as vividly as Fjodor Schaljapin's "Don Quixote" or "Faust".

The poor boy always had to work in commandos doing hard labor, he always had to serve some punitive sentence or other in the bunker, and finally he was sent to work in the punitive Wolf & Dering commando, which was building the Kaiserwald concentration camp. From that point on we lost sight of him, and we never saw him again.

The famous opera singer Jakob Joffe, who had once been the cantor of the large synagogue in Lodz, did not sing initially except for the occasions when he prayed and sang "*Jaale tachnuneinu meerew*" (Let our evening prayer rise) and "*Min hameizar korosi Jo*" (I have called to God in my distress), which was composed by our Riga cantor Rosowski. This singing was unforgettable. The words seemed to come not from his voice but directly from his heart.

He too came to a tragic end. He escaped from a satellite camp, but was caught and executed. I no longer remember today whether he ever actually performed in the ghetto.*

Cantor Serensen sang folk songs and later composed one himself. He also wrote the text for it. In Kaiserwald his song "*Bombes, bombes falt arop*"

* [Ed.: According to Dr. Press, inmates of the central Jail could hear him singing through the open window. One of the survivors, Eva Hoff, told this to Dr. Press.]

(Bombs, bombs fall down) was very popular, as was his song "*Es gehen Kolones, es gehen Korbones*" (Columns are marching, victims are marching).

Like many others, I was very impressed by the concert given by the pianist Herman Godes. At that time he was still very young; in my opinion he will have a great future.

Roschmann and his staff (Gymnich and Buchholz) also came to the concert. He had even taken along his big dog. When "Roschko" came in, the elder of the German ghetto, Leiser, ordered everyone to stand up. He offered him a seat. But because Roschmann refused to sit next to Jews, he and his staff stayed standing at the door. But we noticed that he showed great interest in this concert.

Professor Metz (violin) and Temko (cello) gave two large concerts. Professor Metz invited me personally to the first one, and dedicated it to the memory of the composer Rubinstein, who had been a Jew converted to Christianity. In his introductory words he reminded us of Rubinstein's career in Petersburg. Petersburg – through his words, my thoughts too went back to the beautiful years of my youth in that city. The concert was full of solemnity. At the express wish of Professor Metz, nobody applauded. The applause was expressed only by our tears.

This concert was attended even by Professor Gurwitsch (father of the well-known pianist Horowitz), who did not participate in the cultural life of the ghetto in any other way. Because he was married to an Aryan woman, he was sent to the ghetto fairly late, and now he worked in a plant nursery.

Now and then Mrs. Hanna Taitz charmed us with her folk songs, which she had brought with her from Paris in earlier times.

The German ghetto was no less active in organizing artistic performances. We were completely enchanted when Mrs. Burian (from Prague) sang "Madame Butterfly" in her sweet voice. The saxophonist Jonny was very popular because of his song "Mama", and a Czech Jew sometimes provided excellent entertainment with his patter. He was later hanged by Blatterspiegel at Spilve.

The climax of the season was a performance of the play "Jeremiah", which had been organized with great effort by the Jewish elder, Leiser. Considering the circumstances, the stage design was very good. A genuinely talented actor, Diesendorf* from Vienna, played the leading role.

But the period of all these cultural offerings did not last long, because of the liquidation of the ghetto.

* [Ed.: Weissenstein, not Diesendorf. The latter played Faust.]

The artist Schelkan, who had not performed in the ghetto, tried to comfort the broken hearts in the satellite camps somewhat through his art. The folk songs he performed in his lion's voice (*schaagis ari*) moved us deeply, for they were so appropriate to the time. The songs "*Litwische Stetele*" (Lithuanian Towns) and "*Der Becher*" (The Pitcher) were always in his repertoire. The first one reminded us, the "half-Litvaks", of earlier, happier times. And "The Pitcher" with its enchanting text by the great poet Frug always made a deep impression.

Frug's text is based on the following legend: a pitcher stands in the sky, and all Jewish tears fall into it and are collected there. When this pitcher is full, the Messiah will come. Now we really had to ask whether so many tears had still not filled it up. But perhaps the tears in this pitcher were drying up again? These words were so much more relevant to our time than to the one in which the poet had written them. Yet in spite of the incalculable number of tears shed in recent years, the pitcher had still not been filled up!

But it's only a legend, after all!

Numerous artists entertained us in the satellite camps with a great variety of performances (Aronsohn-Arnou, Kotzer, Scheftelowitsch, Schalit, Gustav Joffe, Sperling-Tschuzhoj, Salomon Ostrowski, Gottlieb, Foma Fomin, Brandt, Schapiro and others).

The engineer Kostia Kaplan, who had learned "magic" in Vienna, offered us true marvels of this art.

The popular songs that were very often sung during that period were "*Habeit min haschomaim urei*" (Look down from heaven and see), "*Ich bin rot und du bist schwarz*",* which was composed in the Daugavpils ghetto, and "*Am Prager Tor*" (At the Prague Gate).** The "Paplagen Italians' Song" was composed in the Paplagen peat-cutting' satellite camp.

There were also a few cantors, truly talented people, from Cologne and Hanover in the German ghetto.

The arrival of the Vilno Jews considerably expanded our repertoire of ghetto songs. We could hear the women from Vilno singing in *Kaiserwald*, the HKP, the Daugavpils factories, the AEG and in other satellite camps.

Their ghetto songs and folk songs were marked by a particular beauty and depth. The songs "*Panar*", "*Vilno, Vilno*", "*Zog nit keinmol as du gehst dem*

* [Ed.: Weil ich bin weiss und er ist schwarz (since I am white and he is black.)]

** [Ed.: Composed in the Riga ghetto.]

letzten Weg" (Don't ever say this is your last journey), "*Genzelech*" (Goslings) and others always moved us to tears.

We will always remember the names of Betty Segal, Paikele from Vilno, and Faigele Broido.

In Strazdumuiža E. Zinn, from Liepāja, wrote the "Strasdenhof Hymn": "*Mir seinen Strasdenhofer Bürger, a naje Europa bojen mir...*" (We're citizens of Strasdenhof, we're building a new Europe...)

Riwotschka Basma from Vilno, who was especially gifted with artistic talent, worked in the "Women's Cloister", the AEG. In her appearance and presentation she reminded us vividly of the famous Russian writer Pushkin. It was grotesque and tragic that she could find time only in the latrine to write the texts and music of her songs, which went directly to our hearts.

Her composition "*Die fraie fojgelech un mir*" (The free birds and we) stayed in our memories for a long time.

Because this chapter seems to be the most appropriate place for it, I would like to mention here that in the summers of 1942 and 1943 soccer teams were organized in both ghettos. The captain of our team was Glaser, and the captain of the German ghetto's team was Scharf. Boxing matches were also organized. The boxers were Haar, Nachke and others. The young people amused themselves playing handball and table tennis.

Men in Women's Roles (In the Small Riga Ghetto)

The reader will certainly be struck by this title and will perhaps expect a light-hearted satire. But after thinking more deeply about the following lines he will be convinced of the tragedy it implies.

Men in women's role!

The men really did begin to take on the roles of women. This transformation was not surprising, because there were very few women and so the men were forced to take their place. Even the men who had never known what cooking meant (including me) were forced by circumstances to learn it. But before one could cook, there were many other difficulties to overcome. The first problem was how to acquire the necessary food. The next question was what to cook, and the next was where to get wood to make a fire. In the beginning, when there were still fences and old wooden buildings in the ghetto, this was relatively simple, but after this possibility was exhausted it became extremely dif-

difficult to make a fire. And if one thing was achieved, then the next one was certainly lacking. A bit of salt, pepper, or onions – where to get them?

In our home it was my son who did the housework. How and where he had learned this art remained a constant mystery to me. He had lost his mother in the ghetto at the tender age of sixteen, and in the good old days at home he had certainly never paid any attention to these things. Apparently he had inherited this talent, for his mother had been a splendid housekeeper and was known in Riga for her excellent cooking.

I was the one who went shopping. First I would get the rations we were officially entitled to, which were very meager. Often the bread had not been baked properly; moreover, we received many "good things". For example, the fish was never fresh and always stank.

There was always a lot of activity in the German ghetto, where the main food distribution warehouse was located, on Ludzas Street next to the Command Headquarters. (Four times as many people lived there as in our ghetto.)

Unlike us, they received their food from the Economic Authority of the Gestapo. In their ghetto one could nearly always see barrels full of large stinking fishheads. The stink was noticeable as soon as one entered the ghetto. Vegetables too were often delivered there in a barely edible condition. But in spite of all this, the German Jewish women were still able to produce something edible from these raw materials. In the German Jewish ghetto and in ours, there was meat only once a week, and it was only horsemeat. So we only shuddered "Brrr" when we picked up this meat. Of course all this was only a supplement to what we scrounged at our work stations or bought from those who had smuggled food into the ghettos at great risk.

There were various places to shop. The most important one was the Lithuanian market (see the chapter on the Small Ghetto). Though I speak here of a market, the reader should not imagine one in the normal sense of the word. The people stood around in this market, and they had in their pockets or hands a cigarette or a pack of cigarettes, onions, some salt, and so on. A person had to be very careful when buying or selling, for woe betide him if the guards came upon him and found anything. If that happened, one's life was on the line. The "Litvaks" (Lithuanian Jews) also traded in secret at their homes, and in view of the circumstances some of them did so on a large scale. The best-known traders were the Lithuanian Jews Gedalie and Sane. Who among us does not know these two names? We believed Gedalie to be a bit foolish, but in business matters he made fools of us. He preached his own philosophy and

even tried to convert us to it. For Purim, Gedalie and Sane even managed to bake the triangular *Hamantaschen* pastries.

Besides these two traders there were also butchers. Of course they too were not butchers in the normal sense of the word. They were people who worked in the slaughterhouse work crew and took back with them whatever scraps of meat they could get hold of. My meat provider was the well-known Riga meat dealer Dumesch. For a time I bought meat from him, until one day it came out that he had always given us horsemeat instead of beef. But this didn't matter – we were satisfied with that too. There were also special providers of spleens, udders and liver. We made various dishes using them.

As I have already mentioned, my son was a veritable artist in the kitchen. His puddings and other dishes were famous in our building, and everyone came to confer with him on how and what to cook. Everyone would ask, "Arthur, what are you cooking today?" Very often, just as everything was ready to eat, a message would come: "The *Kommandant* is walking through the ghetto." And as the reader already knows, one of his specialties was to scrutinize the kitchens and cooking pots so that he could draw his conclusions. In this case there was only one thing to do: throw the food, together with the cooking pots, into the latrine. After that one had to go to bed hungry, and on the following day there were many cares, for new dishes and new food had to be scavenged.

A small number of men went to the women's ghetto or to the German ghetto to eat there. But this was always connected with difficulties. In the first few months the food problem was the most difficult, but later on it became easier through our connections with the city. In any case, there were no starving people in our ghetto, for nobody let the others down.

Of course the *gwirim* (wealthy people) could afford more; they included the drivers and those who worked in the HVL (*Chap and Nehm*), who had the opportunity to scavenge and bring in more than all the others.

On Sundays people also came from the satellite camps to the ghetto to shop.

In addition to the worries about food we were also busy with other house-keeping tasks. We had to wash the laundry, sew, and so on. In a word: men in women's roles!

Bloody Sloka (Schlock)
(Dedicated to My Only Son Arthur, Who Was Killed)

*Ojb ich fun Merder-hant a tojt farletzter
 Wel faln haint cu morgn ojf der erd,
 Un du west zajn der id, vos iz der letzter
 Fun alle idn ojf der welt,
 Zolstu di tojt-klöle fun unz milionen,
 Wi gift cezein iber folk un land
 Un blut-NEKOME, far die merder monen
 Un oncindn ojf der welt NEKOMO-BRAND.*

*(If I, fatally wounded by a murderer's hand,
 Fall dead to the ground this morning,
 And you become the last Jew
 Of all the Jews in the world,
 Spread the death-curse of us millions
 Over peoples and countries
 And call for VENGEANCE for spilled blood
 And light the FIRE OF VENGEANCE in the world.)*

"Mein Cawoe" (My Testament), Jakob Rassein

I am writing this chapter on the fourth anniversary of the murder of my only son. As I write "my memoirs", each chapter has put my nerves under extreme strain, because remembering these events has once again set them very vividly before my eyes. So the reader will surely understand that I can manage to write down the following experience only with shaking hands.

On Sunday, 18 April 1943. an order was given in the ghetto: "All work crews must report to the German ghetto." My son and I also obeyed this order, for together we made up a work crew. For a long time all of us stood lined up in the ghetto and waited for the "lords and masters" to arrive. At last we saw our *Kommandant*, the chief murderer Roschmann, accompanied by his permanent adjutant Gymnich. Schultz and Kassel, the leaders of the Jewish workers in the ghetto, also arrived. Every work crew was reviewed, and then individuals were selected for a special *Kommando* to be sent to Sloka. This time it was our turn: we too were selected to be sent to Sloka. We were ordered to report for Sloka at eight o'clock the following morning. Because from the start I had the feeling that this *Kommando* would bring us bad luck, I tried all day to be

released from it. Unfortunately, I had no success; we had to report there the next morning.

The German head of the Labor Authority, Seliger, checked all of us once again and appointed the Jew Schwabe to be the column leader and a certain Kagan to be his assistant. Comrade Sandler was chosen to be the doctor. We were handed over to Latvian guards, and with them we got into a small steamship bound for Sloka. After a long trip we arrived in Sloka. From this point we had to walk quite a distance to a forest. There a number of large barracks, surrounded by barbed wire, had been prepared for us. The head of the guards, a Latvian, stepped forward and made a long speech. He explained to us that we would be used for peat-cutting here, and that there were enough bullets and wide fields for those who refused to work or took "other liberties". We realized immediately whom we were dealing with, and that nothing good awaited us here.

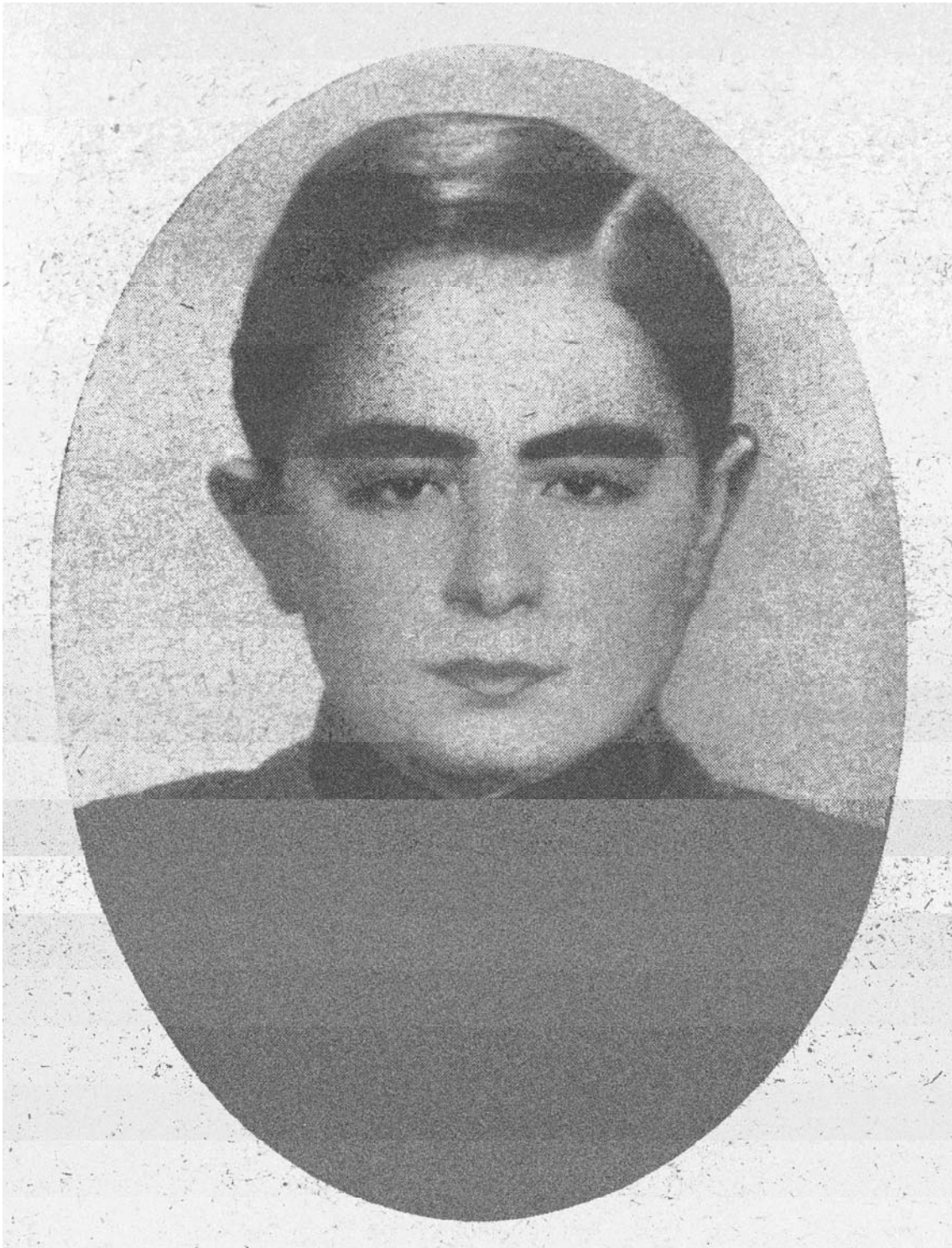
The next morning we began to cut peat at various locations. My son and I worked together. At that time he was seventeen years old, and he dug very hard, standing in water up to his knees. I had to carry the peatmoss from a conveyor belt into the field. Later I worked at a machine that cut the peatmoss. In spite of the hard physical labor the rations were very meager; we felt hungry from the first few days on. The young people tried to form relationships with the local civilians, but unfortunately they had no success. The accommodation was also wretched. All of us slept on a large wooden pallet. Soon there were many sick people and many injuries due to the work. I too nearly lost a hand as I worked at my machine. Because of this injury I was excused from my work and remained in our barrack.

When I was offered the chance to return to the ghetto so that my wound could heal, I refused it.

On 20 May 1943 the *Kommandant* of our ghetto, Roschmann, came to Sloka together with his adjutant Gymnich and the SD man Migge. They inspected the entire work camp, and on this occasion they discovered that my son and the Mordchelewitsch brothers were hoarding fat. Because all the members of the work crew were working, nobody was present at this inspection. A short time later the three of them were taken away, and the murderers immediately placed my son and the Mordchelewitsch brothers off to the side next to their vehicle.

They were ordered to take off their shoes, and from this moment on the "guilty ones" knew they were going to be shot. The Mordchelewitsch brothers tried to escape. The guards ran after them and shot them. By contrast, my son

behaved like a hero. He was much too proud to beg for mercy. He was killed immediately with a shot to the back of the neck.



Arthur Kaufmann
(born 2 July 1925, killed on 20 May 1943 in Schlok)

When everyone came back from work in the evening, the mood was very low. My son had been the work crew's favorite, and his death was deeply mourned.

The doctor, Comrade Sandler, undressed him, wrapped him in linen cloths and buried him on the spot in the presence of the whole work crew. A small funeral ceremony was held and Kaddish was said over their common grave.

For a long time, as long as the *Kommando* was stationed there, the grave was tended and visited by everyone. On the day after their murder their names were announced in the ghetto on a wall poster.

Recently, after my liberation, people told me that a Jewish woman had dropped a small note – a kind of testament – as she was walking her final journey. In the note she requested that its finder give it after the war to a surviving Jew. In short words she wrote: "I know this is my last journey. I beg you to take revenge on the murderers!"

I too know, my precious child, that you and all the others had the same thought in the final minutes of your lives; and for this reason I will fulfill "your testament".

I know the names of your murderers, and I will not rest until I have had revenge for you and all of my relatives.

I have already had the opportunity to confront one of your murderers, Max Gymnich, in front of German and English examining magistrates. I was present for hours at his interrogation. And I am on the trail of the second of these executioners. The female murderer Kowa (from the Kaiserwald concentration camp) and Rudi Seck (from Jumpravmuiža) are already in prison. The notorious Dr. Krebsbach, who participated in all of the actions in Riga (Kaiserwald concentration camp) has already been hanged (after the Mauthausen trial).

We know with certainty that many of our Latvian murderers are still walking about free in Germany and other countries, with the possessions they have stolen from us, and that they enjoy the protection of the right to asylum. They feel very safe, because they believe that there are no more surviving witnesses on earth. Indeed, we returned from the concentration camps weak and sick; nonetheless, we will not rest and will summon up the last remains of our strength until the testament of that Jewish woman and all the other murdered people has been fulfilled.

We must do it, and we will!

Sleep, my son, in eternal peace!

Your name has been indelibly woven into the Jewish people's chain of martyrs!

Professor Simon Dubnow and His Final Journey

I have set myself a difficult task: writing a chapter dedicated to our great historian of this century, Professor Simon Dubnow.

Although this is not easy for me, I have to do it nonetheless, because apart from the fact that his last journey is bound up with the *churbn* of Latvia, I am one of the few survivors to have had the great honor of seeing him — if not in his final hours, then at least in the final days before he died.

Professor Simon Dubnow was born on 23 September 1860 in the city of Mstislavl (Mogilew under the Russian government). As a young man he left the *tschertha-osiedlosci* (the Jewish pale, or area reserved for Jews) and moved to Petersburg. There, in the former capital of Russia, he started as a young man to work for the Jewish journal "*Woschod*" (Sunrise). Later he moved to Odessa. There he decided to dedicate his life to Jewish history. For this reason he was attracted to Vilno, great Jewish Vilno, the Jerusalem of Lithuania. In this city he found the right place for himself and the right surroundings for his work (Dr. Zemach Schabad, Dr. Wigodski and others). From that point on, life in Vilno was closely bound up with Dubnow's scholarly studies. Wherever he could, he promoted his newly adopted home city and tried to attract the greatest Jewish public figures to it.

Later on, before World War I (1914), he went to Russia and remained there until the outbreak of the great Bolshevik October Revolution. Then he moved for a short time to Kovno in Lithuania. He finally found a permanent place to do his work in Berlin. There he wrote his well-known ten-volume history of the Jewish people and his history of Hasidism.

Professor Dubnow explained the riddle of how Judaism had survived for thousands of years by means of his theory of its wandering centers (Palestine, Babylon, Persia, Spain, Poland, Russia, America, and once again Palestine).

Furthermore, he argued that the influence of religion on Judaism had weakened greatly in recent times, and he ascribed this fact to the secularization of Jewish culture. Accordingly, Professor Dubnow was criticized for having underestimated the significance of the Jewish religion as a factor in the preservation of Judaism.

When National Socialism in Germany forced Dubnow to look for a new place to settle, he chose Riga, the capital of the small Republic of Latvia.

In the beautiful Riga suburb of Mežaparks (*Kaiserwald*) he created a new Jewish intellectual center, and the Professor's white villa, nestling deep in the

forest, was well-known to all the Riga Jews. In time his house became a veritable place of pilgrimage. In addition to the intellectual greats of Riga (Dr. Nurock, Dr. Landau, the Sobolewitsch brothers, Rosenzweig and others), the rest of the famous Jewish intelligentsia could also be met in his home.

His extensive library, which filled an entire room, contained books in German, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, French and Russian. There one could find encyclopedic writings and research on particular epochs of Jewish history. But this whole wealth of books was only the small remainder of what he had once possessed, for he had previously sent various manuscripts and works to the Jewish University of Jerusalem and the YIVO (Institute of Jewish Studies) in Vilno.

On his desk there always stood a picture of him with his daughter and grandchildren (the wife and children of the leader of the Socialist Party or Bund, Ehrlich).

Although he had no catalogue of his library, he knew precisely where each book was located. He carried on an extensive correspondence with people all over the world, punctually reading in answering his mail every day.

It was in *Kaiserwald*, which later on was so bloodsoaked for us, that he wrote the first three volumes of his memoirs. In the third volume he dealt with the outbreak of National Socialism. Although the old professor worked constantly, he still had time for everything, and if you asked him how he managed to do it, he would answer, "Only idlers are always too busy, whereas busy people always have time for everything and everybody."

He traveled repeatedly to Vilno and its "YIVO house". He wrote to a friend: "This old Jewish city is poor in *gaschmajjs* (material things) but rich in *ruchnies* (spirit)." (as quoted in the collection "Vilno", published in New York) He visited Vilno for the last time in 1934.

A short time after that he lost his life's companion, Ida Jefimowna. She was buried in the new Jewish cemetery of Riga. Her grave was in the first row of the women's section. But the murderers didn't let these dead rest either; like all of the other graves, hers too was desecrated and destroyed.

In the winter of 1940 he was visited by the Jewish writer Camil Honig. In the name of Jewry living abroad he offered Professor Dubnow the opportunity to move to Sweden.

"I certainly won't leave my people at this difficult time," answered the professor, went into his library, took down several manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and said, "Future historians will have a very difficult task, because who knows how much historical material will be destroyed

through the destruction of the largest Jewish centers. Perhaps this will be the most tragic part of Jewish history after the *churban* (destruction) of the Second Temple. It is possible that the number of victims will be so great that for a long time we will not be able to think clearly. Nonetheless we should avoid panic. A historian who studies the pages of Jewish history will realize the following: the deepest meaning of our history is hope, which becomes a reality again and again, for tyrants will always drown in their own blood. I am convinced that Germany will be destroyed, just as sure as I am of the fact that snow melts in the spring. Perhaps the Jewish *kibbutzim* (communities) in Europe will be destroyed for years, but we still have a powerful Jewish community in the United States of America, in Latin America and in the other English-speaking countries. Palestine may go through a great crisis in the coming years, but I hope that the *jischuw* (settlement) there will grow and flourish. We definitely need Palestine for our continued existence; even the non-Zionists need it. In the English-speaking countries we have to become proficient in the English language, but we should not neglect Yiddish. American Jewry will have to grow spiritually and understand the great task that fate has bestowed upon it."

Today, seven years later, we clearly realize the truth of his prophetic words.

The Germans occupied Riga and began, together with the Latvians, to destroy the Latvian Jewish community. The old professor was hidden as well as possible, but the Gestapo heard of his existence and he was arrested shortly before the opening of the ghetto in September 1941.

His age and his imposing appearance did not prevent the murderers from beating him. They were interested in the manuscripts he had written in Riga and demanded that he hand them over. But he had hidden these manuscripts, and he said he had left them in *Kaiserwald*, which he had left months before. He was released, but arrested again later. Thanks to the head of the Jewish Council, the Vienna Jew Schlitter, he was released again and this time was put into the ghetto, now a broken man. For this, Schlitter was arrested by the Gestapo and later killed.

In the ghetto the old professor received a small room in the shelter on Ludzas Street. But even there he was not idle; he started to write an article about the ghetto, using the same mechanical pencil that he said had served him for thirty-seven years. During the days he spent in the ghetto – days that were already counted – he once again created a small Jewish intellectual center. In the first action, on 30 November 1941, he was transported to a second shelter on Blech Square, and later in the second action, on 8 December 1941, he was

taken to the house at 56 Ludzas Street. The families of the Jewish policemen lived there. People said that Professor Mintz's wife had also been brought there.

The Latvian murderer Danskop went into this house to search it and asked the old professor whether he too was a member of the Jewish policemen's families. When Dubnow replied that he was not, Danskop forced him to join the rows of people that were marching by at that moment.

A great uproar immediately broke out in the house, and a Jewish policeman – a German Jew who had earned an Iron Cross, whose name is unrecorded – ran after the rows to save him, but it was already too late.

The great historian now made his last journey. In Rumbula near Riga he died a horrible death, as did nearly all the Jews of Riga.

The man who had written the history of Jewish suffering himself became a Jewish martyr.

The great scholar and historian of our age is no more!

The great son of his people is dead!

With bowed heads we stand at the unmarked grave of the famous Jewish historian of the twentieth century: Professor Simon Dubnow!

Latgale (Lettgallen)

a) The Jewish City of Dvinsk (Daugavpils, Dünaburg) and Its Destruction

As I write the following chapter about the life and the downfall of the city of Dvinsk, I do so with special, loving care. In Dvinsk I received the first impressions of my infancy and boyhood. My spiritual development, the beginnings of my intellectual education – this city gave me both. Through its freshness and liveliness it introduced me to the culture of Judaism, but it also gave me my first relationships with the rest of the world. When the hammer blows of history destroyed it, perhaps humanity as a whole did not lose anything special, but I lost the scene of my youth.

I.

Dünaburg – Dvinsk

On the right bank of the Daugava (Düna, Dvina) River, where the roads go from east to west, there once stood a large, beautiful Jewish city named Dvinsk. In my time, before World War I (1914), it had 100,000 inhabitants.

More than half of them were Jews. The Jewish part of Daugavpils grew from year to year and had well-known figures in every area of endeavor. Daugavpils was known as a cultural bridge between East and West.

In those days it had a Jewish school in which instruction was given in Russian; there was also a *gymnasium* (college preparatory school), a *Commerz* (a commercial school whose director was Sacharow), a trade school, and a secondary school which graduated many gifted and educated individuals. There were also some college preparatory schools for women (Brojerska and others) that were attended by Jewish girls. The Jewish trade school of Dvinsk, which was located in a suburb, had very modern equipment and trained a large number of good craftsmen.

The Dvinsk Jews played a large role in the great revolutionary movement of 1904–1905. There were many victims among them too, and the graves of those who fell for the revolution lay in the first row of the Jewish cemetery.

Dvinsk was characterized by its beautiful public gardens (e.g. Dubrovinska on Alexander Boulevard, which was later called Tarelotschka) and enchanting spots for summer picnics (Stropi and Pogulanka).

As I write down my memories of this city, my *rebbe*s (religious teachers) Barmasel and Melech-Mojsche also come to mind. The latter had a long beard, and we boys once glued it with wax to the table while he was asleep. I would also like to mention some outstanding *mjuchosim* (public figures) of Dvinsk at that time: Menachem and Robert Wittenberg, Jakob Sachs, the engineer Jakob Mowschensohn, Garkawi, S. Gurwitsch, the lawyer Jakobsohn, Friedland and others. The Friedlands were related to the prominent families of Baron Schmelke Horowitz, Baron Löwenstein, and Parnas in Austria (Galicia).

The doctors practicing at that time included the fine Talmudic scholar Dr. Schapiro, Dr. Israelsohn, Dr. Kretzmer and others. The pharmacists Luntz, Poljak, Wolow and Fain had excellent professional expertise.

The *Chowewei Zion* (Lovers of Zion) movement and, later on, Zionism, had many adherents in Dvinsk, as did the Jewish socialist workers' movement, the Bund.

The volunteer fire brigade in their smart uniforms, headed by Wittenberg and the engineer Mowschensohn, consisted largely of Dvinsk Jews. Becoming a member was considered a great honor and was quite difficult to achieve. I can still remember the following outstanding members: Milkow, Presma, Gandler, B. Rafalowitsch, Rappoport, Grein, S. Gutkin, Jawitsch and others.

There were also some Jewish clubs and a Jewish theater in Dvinsk. Here I would like to mention that the Jewish artist Michoels (Wowski), who is very

well-known today in the Soviet Union, especially in Moscow, was born in Dvinsk.*

The city was a great trade center and a meeting place for the merchants of the Baltic countries.

It also played a role in the field of religion. It had many large and small synagogues, *Talmud toras* and *yeshivas* (religious schools). Moreover, outstanding religious figures such as the world-famous *gaonim* (leading rabbinical scholars) Reb Meier Simche (Kahn) and the Rogachev *gaon* (Josif Rosin) lived there. Both of them wrote numerous works of religious philosophy. For example, the Rogachev *gaon* wrote a scholarly philosophical book entitled *The Revelation of the Mysteries*. The well-known Jewish writer Bjalik declared on the occasion of his visit to Dvinsk that the *gaon* was the equivalent of two Einsteins. Both *gaonim* knew the entire *shas* (Talmud) by heart.

Here I would also like to mention my grandfather (Schachne Kaufmann), who was regarded as a great religious figure and also knew a significant part of the Talmud by heart. He often carried on Talmudic disputes with the *gaon* Reb Meier Simche. Twice a day, morning and evening, he taught the *schitur* (Talmud) in the synagogue.

During World War I, when the enemy encamped outside the city for a long time (in 1914), most of the Jewish population left Dvinsk. Only the *gaon* Reb Meier Simche remained faithful to it even in the most difficult times. After the war, the Rogachev *gaon* returned to Dvinsk from Leningrad, but a considerable proportion of the population either remained in Russia or moved to Riga or abroad.

II. Daugavpils (1918)

Daugavpils-Dvinsk was part of Latvia and was the country's second-largest city. The face of old Dvinsk had changed completely, and now only between 15,000 and 18,000 Jews lived there, most of whom had been born in the countryside. The following Jews served on the city council: the Kopilowski brothers, Gurwitsch, Meiksin, Lewin and others. In order to give Daugavpils a Latvian character, on Dr. Ulmanis' orders a huge building called the House of the People was built in the market square, and a gigantic bridge over the Daugava, called the Freedom Bridge, was built in the center of the city.

* [Ed.: Wowski was killed in Minsk on January 13, 1948.]

Both *gaonim* died shortly before the outbreak of World War II; they were buried in Daugavpils. Their graves stood as symbols in the old Jewish cemetery, and every Jew who wanted to pour out his heart to someone visited them. Today the old Jewish Dvinsk exists no more, nor do the holy graves of the *gaonim*, for in the last terrible war they were leveled to the ground.

III.

Fascist Germany's declaration of war caused a great panic among the Jews, not only in Daugavpils, Latgale's capital, but throughout Latgale. Events developed so rapidly that no time remained to make any decisions. The city of Kovno, only 170 kilometers distant from Daugavpils, was already occupied by the enemy. A short time later Daugavpils itself was bombarded by the enemy, and on 28 June 1941 the Fascist German army occupied it. There were battles only in the suburbs of Stropi and the well-known spa Poguļanka. Now the enemy pressed forward, on the one side toward Rēzekne (Rositten), and on the other toward Krustpils and Riga. In the meantime, the fairly small number of Latvians in occupied Daugavpils did not yet know what to do with the Jews. They waited for directives from Riga. Riga fell to the Germans on 1 July. Immediately afterward, Daugavpils received from the murder headquarters of Latvia, the Aizsargu house, its guidelines on how to deal with the Jews. In the meantime, all was quiet in Daugavpils until 2 July, when the general large-scale *Aktion* against Latvian Jewry began.

On 2 July 1941 came the first order: "All men must report to the marketplace!" At once a large crowd assembled. Sick men were dragged from their beds. People saw the prominent Daugavpils citizen Magaram, who was half-paralyzed, carried there on a stretcher. They had been sure that only the healthy men would be recruited for labor and that the sick ones would be exempted. Until the arrival of the Latvian Aizsargi and the Germans, the Jews stood all day in the marketplace. Later the first shots were fired there. The first victim was a certain Leiser Goldberg, because he was not standing in his row properly. The second was a Mr. Meier Meierowitsch who had tried to speak to his wife. Now all the Jews were taken to prison under heavy guard. On the way, they were subjected to harassment and beatings.

The prison was surrounded with machine guns. A very few Jews were separated from the others and transported to the woods at Stropi to be executed. The others stood for a long time in the prison courtyard. The Latvians demanded that two Jews volunteer to be sacrificed for the whole community; if this did not happen, all of them would be killed. The prominent Daugavpils

rabbi Fuchs and the equally prominent Daugavpils *magid* (quasi-rabbi) volunteered. This made a deep impression on all the assembled people. The Latvians now took the two of them out of the crowd, made them stand aside, and took all the others into the prison. There the circumstances were terrible, because before the Germans took it over, complete control lay in the hands of the Latvians, who exercised it with especial sadism. To everyone's surprise, Rabbi Fuchs and the *magid* were released. They received permission to bring food to the prisoners.

The collection point for all the food that was contributed was the Planower house of prayer. The prisoners' relatives had to bring the food there to be handed on. Every day from that time on, one could see Rabbi Fuchs, the *magid*, and a fourteen-year-old boy whom they had taken on as a helper pulling with their own hands a wagon full of provisions down Daugavpils Street to the prison. As they did so, they were only too often jeered at and beaten by the local people. Gradually this abuse became so violent that they had to be admitted to the prison infirmary. They stayed there for a long time. After they recovered, they too were taken to the Daugavpils ghetto.

IV.

Jewish Dvinsk was burning! First the large Choral Synagogue was set aflame by the Latvians. A young man named Elia Lakus died in the conflagration. Soon the remaining small Jewish houses of prayer were also burned down. Only the large and prominent Beth Midrasch and the Planower house of prayer of the *gaonim* were spared. The Beth Midrasch, in which the *gaon* Reb Meier Simcha used to pray, was used by the Germans as a warehouse for provisions. The Rogachev *gaon's* Planower house of prayer, where in my youth a *minche* (afternoon prayer) could be said at any time, was converted into an old-age home for Aryans.

Individual Jews who had in the meantime managed to make their way to Daugavpils from the countryside told terrible tales about the atrocities committed against them by Latvian young men and members of student fraternities. Some of the Jews had been killed in horrible ways.

At the end of July a new regulation was announced: "Every Jew must wear a yellow star." Non-compliance was punishable by death. The Daugavpils Jews differed from the others in that they had to wear three stars: one on the left knee, the second on the chest, and the third on the back. Nobody knew why the Daugavpils Jews were more "privileged" than the Jews of Riga.

The fate of the men in the prison was terrible. The authorities promised to send them to work, but what then happened was that they were sent away and never returned. They were executed near the prison in the well-known *Eisenbahngarten* (railroad park). Of course all this did not take place on a single day, and in order to conceal this from the outside world, individual prisoners were even released from prison.

In the meantime, the Germans had settled down in Daugavpils. They established the notorious Gestapo and an area command headquarters. Now they took over the civil administration, including the Latvian prison. There the number of Jews had already shrunk considerably. From that time on, the Jews worked in all the German units, even Gestapo headquarters, which set up workshops and shoemakers' and tailors' shops. Jews also worked in the field command headquarters and later in the city command headquarters as cleaners, boilermen and so on. Women, men and teenagers worked. The rations in the city were very bad, for none were provided regularly. People had to scavenge something edible for themselves through the units they worked for. Some units set up satellite camps so as to exploit the prisoners twenty-four hours a day. These Jews lived under heavy guard in special buildings that they were not allowed to leave. All contact with the outside world was forbidden on pain of death. The same punishment was decreed for reading newspapers or speaking to Aryans.

V.

The few Daugavpils Jews were now moved into a ghetto. Among them was the well-known physician Dr. Kretzer, who immediately committed suicide.

The ghetto was set up outside the city, across from the huge, ancient Daugavpils fortress on the other (Kurzeme) side of the Daugava River. Cavalry barracks with large stalls for horses were still standing there from the time of the Russian czar Peter the Great. Besides the Daugavpils Jews, the Jews from the countryside were also taken to this ghetto on foot. Because there was not enough room for everyone, the Fascist German murderers hit upon the following solution: they asked the "surplus" new arrivals to volunteer so that they could receive better housing. A large number of women, children, and men as well volunteered. Thereupon they were taken to the Poguļanka spa on the opposite bank of the Daugava. All of them were killed on the shooting range there next to the forest, which in my time was called *Peski* (Sand). The executions were carried out in the same way everywhere. The unfortunate people

were forced to take off all their clothes, they were pushed into the already-dug graves, and then they were shot with machine guns.

At this time Rabbi Fuchs was also taken to the ghetto. The *magid* had died in the prison infirmary. The Rogachev *gaon*'s wife and old Rabbi Leib Plazinski from the small town of Višķi, who was at that time the rabbi in the Daugavpils suburbs, were also in the ghetto.

A Jewish Committee was created. Mosche Galpern was appointed chairman, and the other members were Mischa Mowschensohn, Dr. Dannemann, Mrs. Landau, Mrs. Edelstein and Mrs. Mowschensohn Sr. Mr. Pasternak was elected Police Prefect (Chief).

From 7 to 9 November 1941, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, large-scale "*Aktionen*" were carried out in the ghetto. On 7 November the entire ghetto was surrounded by thousands* of Latvian policemen. A tremendous panic broke out, for the Gestapo people ordered the workers who had red passes to line up in rows. These workers said their farewells to their wives and children and went to work. At the gate stood the leader of the whole action, the notorious Latvian Schover, who frisked every individual. In the process, a young man named Kosba and a young woman named Galpern were pulled out of the row. These two were beaten to death on the spot by the murderers. When the rows of workers came back in the evening, the ghetto was a ghastly sight! There was a deathly calm, and no living being could be seen. Blood, more blood, and still more blood! Some people had hidden in a chimney, and ten women who had been knifed to death were found on the floor. Three men who had hidden in the latrine pit were saved. It was found out later that the whole ghetto had been transported in green trucks to the other bank of the Daugava and bestially murdered there. The procedure was always the same, beginning with the victims being forced to strip naked.

The only people who managed to escape before the ghetto was liquidated were Rabbi Fuchs and the wife of the Rogachev *gaon*. They were taken by a Russian to a small town (Braslava) on the Polish border, but were later killed there. Nor did the rest of the ghetto exist much longer. It was liquidated on 1 May 1942. The Jewish Committee was killed together with the Jewish police force. The only person who accidentally survived was Mrs. Landau, who happened to be working in the city at the time. During the ghetto's existence two women were "officially" hanged there and one was shot. The first was Miss Mascha Schneider, who had been selected together with her grandmother for

* [Ed.: hundreds]

an "*Aktion*" in Poguļanka. She was already lying completely naked in a ditch and waiting to be murdered. Suddenly she began to scream, "It's a mistake, I'm not a Jew!" The people genuinely believed that it was a mistake and released her. Then she lived for quite a while in Daugavpils using identification papers that made her seem Aryan. When the Jews went to work, they always encountered "pretty Mascha", sometimes even in the company of German soldiers. The Gestapo got wind of this, and she was arrested and quickly brought to the ghetto to be hanged. Then all the ghetto inmates, even the children, were herded together to watch Mascha's execution. Her body remained hanging in the ghetto for a long time, because the murderers wanted the Jews who were in satellite camps in the city and seldom came to the ghetto to see her hanging there.

The second woman, who was shot, was the wife of the tailor Meierow. She was in the ghetto with five small children and was suspected of trading. The Jews had to give up their last possessions for a piece of bread, and it often happened that the Latvians took the gold and didn't give anything in return. There was no higher authority to which one could complain or apply for redress. Mrs. Meierow too was executed in the presence of her five children and the rest of the ghetto.

The third woman was Minna Gitelsohn. It was said that she had resisted the business manager of the Hotel Kontinent, where she worked, when he tried to molest her. He then lodged a complaint with the Gestapo, in which he claimed that she had been trading. She was taken directly from the hotel to the ghetto and hanged. Everyone was forced to witness the death of this woman too. Her body hung from the gallows for three days.

VI.

After the liquidation of this ghetto a smaller one was set up in the city. All the Jews of Daugavpils, as well as the rest of the Jews who had been herded in from Latgale, were crowded into a single house (which had belonged to the Klingmann) in the city center on Riga Street across from the Catholic church. Seven children who had happened to survive were also taken there.

Once again the Jews worked in the workshops of the area command headquarters and also in those of the Gestapo. A short time later a transport to Riga was decreed. Nobody believed this would take place, so many committed suicide on the way. Later another small transport was sent, and then finally the last transport, consisting of the sixty workers of the Gestapo workshops. All of the transports arrived "safely", the first two in the *Kaiserwald* concentration

camp in Riga and the last one in the well known Lenta satellite camp of the Riga Gestapo.* This final transport included the remains of the "youth of Daugavpils", the aforementioned seven small children. The few Daugavpils Jews who are still alive today come from these three transports.

"Daugavpils is free of Jews!" was the inscription on the signs one saw when entering the city.

Gone is the great and beautiful Jewish Dvinsk, gone forever! The great Beth Midrasch has been transformed into a dance hall, and the Planower house of prayer is still an old-age home for Aryans.

This was the end of the Jewish community of Daugavpils, once famous and known throughout the world.

**b) Rositten
(Rēzekne) and Its Surroundings
(Zilupe, Ludza, Krāslava, Preiļi etc.)**

The small town of Rēzekne, in which about 7,000 Jews lived, suffered great destruction because of the enemy's attacks. In the very first days after it was occupied, a Gestapo presence was established. But the local population did not even wait for the commands of the "conquerors"; it began its "work" immediately on its own initiative. All the Jews were locked up in the town prison and they had to go to work from there. A short time later a small group was taken from the prison to the Jewish cemetery of Rēzekne. The local rabbi, Reb Chaim Lubotzki, also received an "invitation" from the Gestapo. Instead of reporting to the Gestapo, he went directly to the cemetery. People said that he first went into the *mikwe* (ritual bathhouse), and then put on his coat and *talith*. At the cemetery he met his children, among others. He comforted all those who were present and read a chapter of the Psalms. Then he turned to the German and Latvian murderers and assured them that there was no help for it, they would lose this war, whatever happened. Moreover, because of the destruction of Jewry, God's vengeance would come down on them. Just as he turned toward his children to bid them farewell, a shot was fired. He ended his life with the words, "*Schma...*" from the prayer "Hear, Israel...". All of the others who had been taken to the cemetery were also killed.

* [Ed.: Lenta was the only camp where Jews lived in relative comfort. Kaufmann did not mean "notorious", when he called it "well known".]

It was said that a certain Simka Bersin defended himself with an axe when the Latvians tried to arrest him. He was very strong and with his axe he killed three men. After being overpowered, he was beheaded with his own axe.

Many of the Rēzekne Jews were taken from the prison to the Viping forest. There, on Mount Zemena, they died a terrible death. They were thrown into the graves still half-alive, and the local Russian people said that the earth above the graves had continued to move for three more days.

In mid-1944 a *Kommando* of thirty men was taken from the Central Prison of Riga to the Rēzekne prison. It was bound for the 1005 *Kommando*, or *Stuetzpunkt*. They worked in chains and had to burn the corpses and then clear away all the traces. After they had finished their "work", they themselves were murdered. People told me that my schoolmate Isaak Misroch was among those who died there.

The following incident shows the local people's attitude toward the Jews. A butcher whose shop was in the central market across from the prison grabbed a small Jewish child and literally tore it to pieces, in order to show the peasants who had gathered in the marketplace how to deal with the Jews.

Of all the Jews who were in Rēzekne during the German occupation, only two men survived (Israelit). These two men had been hidden by a Polish man who lived in the city.

The roughly 350 Jews of Zilupe were assembled and led by the Latvians to a bridge about two kilometers outside the city. There all of them were killed without exception. Among those killed were the rabbi and the prominent Dreier, Feinstein, and Aron families. The only person who resisted was David Deutsch, and for this reason the murderers beat him savagely and buried him half-alive. The prominent Laser family was killed on the road to Tukums. They were burned alive in a synagogue. The children died in various other *Aktionen*.

The small nearby towns (Pasiēna, Polizk, Vec-Sloboda, Kuprava, Pilda and Rundēni) were not spared by the Latvian expeditions. Only a few of the Jews living there had the opportunity to flee to Ludza and find shelter in its ghetto.

In Ludza the Latvians set up a small ghetto for about 300 persons in the synagogue, after killing many Jews. However, the inhabitants of this ghetto were transported to the Daugavpils ghetto. Only a very small fraction of them arrived; the others were killed on the way there. Some of the Jews in the towns of Kārsava, Varakļāni and Vilāni were killed by the Latvians on the spot; the

others were taken to the Daugavpils ghetto. This remainder was joined on the way by the remaining Jews from Preiļi and Višķi.

During a rest stop in Aglona, next to the world-famous Aglona cloister, they were met with blows by the local population, and many of them died a martyr's death next to this Catholic holy place.

Nor were the few Jews in Malta (Weinstock and others) forgotten.

Krāslava, the city that had become known because of the famous sculptor N. Aronsohn, of whom the Krāslava Jews were very proud, was also not spared in the general destruction.

In the first few days after the occupation the local people, supported by a Latvian expedition from Riga, treated the Jews with extreme cruelty. All the Jews, young and old, were assembled in the large firemen's square (Poshar-naja). The wealthy Jewish citizen Salman Rabinowitsch was arrested separately and also taken there. In front of the assembled community he was hanged at the door of the fire station. Most of the remaining Jews were shot with machine guns and burned on a pyre. Israel Elzofon's wife, a dentist, was picked out of the crowd and taken separately to the Augustover forest. There she was hanged on a hill across from the Latvian heroes' memorial.

The rest of the Jews were forced to walk to Daugavpils. Among them were the three old people Lea Federmann, Slate Lin and Jankel Laufer. Because of their old age they could no longer keep up, so they were taken to the Daugavpils prison. On the way, this column met the surviving Jews from Dagda. The two groups were joined, and all of them were killed in the well-known spa Poguļanka near Daugavpils. People said that the Latvian mayor of Krāslava, Briedis, and an unskilled laborer in the militia, Pētersons, were especially active in this operation. In addition to the "work" they accomplished in Krāslava, they went along to Daugavpils just to see with their own eyes the destruction of the Jewish community of Krāslava.

The only ones who managed to hide in a peasant's home were Mrs. Scheine Dinermann and her daughter, her daughter's child, and her son-in-law Barkan.

Neighbors betrayed this hiding place to the Gestapo, and the whole house was surrounded. In panic, Mrs. Dinermann lost her head and started to scream uncontrollably. Her daughter, seeing the onset of the catastrophe that awaited them all, tied her mother's mouth shut and thus inadvertently suffocated her. The refugees were not found; they sought refuge with a Polish priest and so were saved. People told me that a small child of the Sislin family was taken in by a Polish man and thus survived.

On the road between Daugavpils and Rēzekne lay the small Rušona railroad station and, 17 kilometers further on, the small town of Preiļi, where about 1,800 Jews lived. This prosperous and fruitful region had seen the formation of a large merchant community (including Potasch, Kaufmann, Lechowitzki, Kopp and others). In this little town the Jews had established a small religious center.

When the Germans occupied Preiļi on 28 June 1941, all the Jews were herded together into the marketplace and divided into groups according to the streets where they lived. The inhabitants of Daugavpils Street and Rušonu Street were shot the same day, the others in two *Aktionen* on 4 and 8 August 1941. It was Latvians who committed these murders! Before the murders they picked forty Jews out of one group, forced them to put on clown-like masks, and led them through the streets singing. Later they were taken to Znotiņi and murdered there.

The Jew Skutelski, helped by Schachtner, set fire to his house, which had been entered by the Gestapo. But both of them also died in the flames, because people grabbed them and threw them into the burning house. Some of the Jewish inhabitants – Schaffer, Simon Chagi with his wife and child, Samuel and Montik Ostband, and Hacker with a child – had hidden in a ditch in the woods with the help of an Aryan. Hacker and the child died in this ditch. All of the others were able to stay there for a long time, but later on they too were betrayed by Latvians.

Salman Plawin and Grischa Starobin also hid in the woods until 1943, but then they were discovered by Latvians and shot. Of the entire Jewish population of Preiļi, only nineteen people survived; seven of them now live in Riga. Of those who fled at that time to Soviet Russia, the ones who returned were Minna and Schloime Silbermann with their three children, Moische and Jechiel Zemel (both of them were invalids), and Schaja Skutelski (Dr. Skutelski's brother), who had survived first the Riga concentration camp and then a German concentration camp.

Zemgale, Kurzeme and Vidzeme

a) Libau (Liepāja)

"A window toward Europe!" This was the idea of the Russian Czar Peter the Great. In order to create this window, Czar Alexander III built Liepāja, the largest harbor on the Baltic Sea, and provided it with strong fortifications.

Liepāja played a significant role for Russia as a harbor for imports and exports, especially for the export of grain from Ukraine. Through the construction of the Liepāja-Romner railroad with a branch line to Moscow-Rybinsk a direct connection was created with Ukraine. Before World War I the largest Jewish export firms, such as Dreyfuss (France) and Brodski (Ukraine), had branch offices in Liepāja. The export of lumber to England, which lay almost exclusively in Jewish hands, was partly routed through Liepāja and Ventspils (Windau). Thus the Jews played a significant role in the development of this great Russian harbor, and in the natural course of things a very wealthy Jewish center developed, which later gradually declined under Latvian rule. The huge Liepāja fortress, which bore the name of Alexander III, was also built by Jews. Until the beginning of World War II about 14,000 Jews lived in Liepāja. Today Jewish Liepāja exists no longer, and the once-prosperous institutions and great synagogues have likewise disappeared.

Right at the beginning of the war, the Jews of Liepāja were the first to have the "luck" of being occupied by the enemy (on 29 June 1941). Because the fighting took place in the city itself, a large part of it was destroyed. As early as the third day after the German occupation, the Latvian population began to "visit" the Jews. After receiving their first directives from the "murder staff" in Riga, they began the arrests, which claimed many victims. Civil administration was quickly taken over by the victors, and a Gestapo was set up. Dr. Zitkus became the police chief, later succeeded by Dietrich. The SD leader was the notorious murderer Kügler, assisted by Handke, Kraft and others. With their help the first *Aktion* began on 23 July, and it cost about 4,000 Jews, mostly men, their lives. Dr. Schwab, who was very prominent in Liepāja, died an especially gruesome death. They gouged out one of his eyes and tortured him until he himself begged to be killed.

The Jews were arrested and gathered together in the Women's Prison of Liepāja. There the Latvians carried out strict body searches and took away all valuables. Every evening small transports of Jews were sent to Šķēde behind

the military harbor, where they were bestially murdered. In August 1941 the Jewish population was forced to wear the yellow Star of David and was allowed out on the streets only from 10 a.m. until noon and from 3 to 5 p.m. They were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks. The synagogues and all other Jewish institutions – such as the *moschav-zkejnim* (old-age home), the *Talmud thora* (religious school) and the Jewish club – were destroyed by rampaging crowds. Some of the Jews in the small towns of Aizpute (Hasenpöth), Pāvilosta and Grobiņa were killed on the spot, and the very few who remained were taken to Liepāja.

On 16 December 1941 the second large *Aktion* took place, which cost 3500 Jews their lives.

Before this action a decree was announced which forbade people to leave their apartments. The Jews were taken out of their apartments by Latvians wearing green armbands and driven in trucks to the prison. From there they were taken at night in sledges to the shooting range at Skeden and shot there. At one point some of the Jews ran away from the sledge during this journey. Thereupon a new order was issued to the effect that the Jews had to remove their shoes and outer clothing; when they arrived at their destination they had to take off the rest of their clothes and were shot entirely naked.

There were a few small *Aktionen* later on, in which mainly women and children, as well as men who were unable to work, were killed.

Like the Jews everywhere else, the Liepāja Jews also had to work in various units. The SD set up workshops where the Jews worked under the direction of David Siwzon. Although Siwzon managed to make contact with the partisans, he paid for this with his life,* whereas his friend Josef Mandelstamm escaped. Of course the Liepāja Jews were also subjected to much harassment by the local people. Their number declined fairly rapidly, and on 1 July 1942 only a very small group (850 persons) was taken to the ghetto in the old city center of Liepāja. There too, many of them (Chawensohn, Neu and others) lost their lives. The Council of Elders in the ghetto was headed by the Liepāja wholesale merchant Israel Israelit and the lawyer Kaganski (both of whom were killed). Dr. Weinreich managed the outpatient clinic, Dr. Baron and Dr. Isaksohn the dental ward. The ghetto *Kommandant* was Patrolman Kerscher.

On the day before Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement, 8 October 1943) the ghetto was dissolved and the remaining inmates were taken in cattle cars to Riga, guarded by eighty Latvian volunteers.

* [Ed.: He survived.]

In the Riga ghetto a certain Zinn hanged himself. The prominent mill owner Moritz Zinn from Liepāja, his wife, son and daughter were killed in Riga.

The doctors Plotkin and Baron were also taken from the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp to *Stuetzpunkt*.

My other accounts of ghettos and concentration camps include the fate of the Liepāja Jews.

b) Mitau (Jelgava)

Jelgava, once the capital of Duke Jacob and the province of Kurzeme, is about 50 kilometers distant from Riga. Here too, the Jews played a significant role in building up a large trading center (L. Hoff, Jaffet and others). It was thanks to them that after World War I the city once again flourished and large department stores were established (Dsentschik, the Hirschmann brothers). Jelgava was also famous for its old secondary school, which had educated many great Jewish personages coming from all parts of Latvia. The leaders of the Zionist movement in Latvia all came from Jelgava.

The splendid Jelgava Palace, built by the Italian architect Rastrelli, was destroyed in World War I and subsequently restored by the Latvians. Here the *Gauleiter* Freiherr von Medem established his residence. But after the final struggles of World War II nothing remained of this work of art, or indeed of Jelgava as a whole.

"Jelgava is *judenrein* (free of Jews)!" This was the sign one saw immediately when driving into the city. The Germans and the Latvians had made sure of this in the very first month after the German occupation, July 1941. The city's Jews were killed in gruesome ways. Many of them were forced into the synagogue and burned alive in it; others, such as Dr. Lewitas, were shot dead in the cemetery. The Desentschik and Hirschmann families' end was especially tragic: they were forced to dig their own graves beforehand (Berner). The Latvians dragged the school director Bowschower and his child into the marketplace for a public execution. According to reports, the local Latvians Veilands, Pēteris Siliņš, Kauliņš, Dr. Sproģis and Leimanis, as well as the returned Baltic Germans Colonel Schultz and Hollstein, took part in all of these atrocities and murders.

c) Tukums, Auce (Autz), Ventspils (Windau), Sabile (Zabeln) etc.

In Tukums, the entire Jewish population, together with the small remainder of surviving Jews from Kandava and other small towns, was driven into the large synagogue. The synagogue was set afire and everyone in it died a horrible

death, including Rabbi Lichtenstein together with his whole family. The gypsies of the city and its surroundings were killed in this action together with the Jews.

In Auce (Autz) as well, no Jew remained alive. Only a physician, the son-in-law of the industrialist Klein, tried to hide together with his child. But he too was discovered by the Latvian murderers. He begged them to at least spare his child, but all his pleading was in vain: the Latvians shot both him and his child.

The murderers also rampaged in Ventspils (Windau), as they did everywhere, and killed all the Jews who lived there. They intended to spare the old city physician Feitelberg, but he declined and was killed in the same way as his co-religionists. The railroad physician Dr. Friedmann and his family were allowed to live for about two months longer. Then they too were killed, together with the well-known "Tante Anna", whose status as a Jewish convert to Christianity did not help her at all.

Thus Ventspils became *judenrein!*

In Sabile (Zabeln) the entire Jewish population of about 500 people – men, women and children – were driven into a new house that had just been built by Perelmann. From this house they were then transported to a forest five kilometers away and gruesomely murdered. Rabbi Kahn of Sabile and his family were killed in this action. According to reports, the Latvians Mazais Bērziņš and Egons Goss participated in these atrocities. Only the two daughters of the Jew Wulfahrt, who were of mixed birth, survived in Sabile. They had to be baptized immediately. Their father was also murdered.

Two other families, those of Salman Blumenau and Löwenthal, who had come from Russia, were saved. But they did not stay in Sabile.

In Bauska, many Jews were castrated.

About 2,500 Jews lived in the province of Vidzeme, mostly distributed among the towns of Cēsis, Valmiera, Valka, Rūjiena, Gulbene and Sigulda. Some lived in even smaller towns and in the countryside. Only a very few of all these people were able to save themselves, because the Latvian "heroes" murdered them immediately, on the spot.

Those Jews who had fled from Riga and had been arrested during their escape remained in the Valmiera prison for a long time. All of them were killed.

The Diner family from Cēsis (wife, son and daughter) and a Mrs. Kaiser (née Barkan in Marienhausen (Alūksne)) in the countryside were able to save themselves.

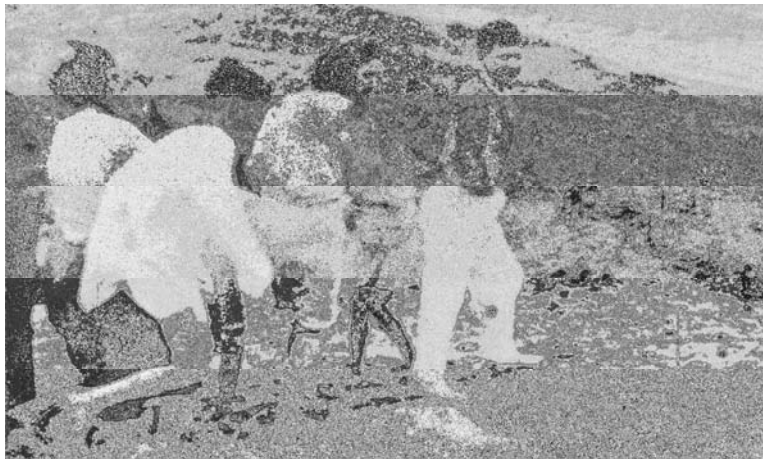
Mass Killing of Libau (Liepaja) Jews at the Beach of Skeden, December 1941



A group of Jewish women and girls huddle together prior to their execution by Latvian SD and police (Bundesarchiv – Aussenstelle: BArch B 162 Photo 02615)



A group of naked Jewish women and girls walk to the execution ground (Bundesarchiv – Aussenstelle: BArch B 162 Photo 02619)



A group of Jewish children is led to the execution site (Bundesarchiv – Aussenstelle: BArch B 162 Photo 02620)

Prominent Latvian Jews Murdered



(From left) Menachem Mendel, Chief Rabbi of Riga; Dr. Arkady Schwab, Physician



Professor Simon Dubnow, Historian; Dr. Vladimir Mintz, Professor of Surgery, University of Latvia; Osip Finkelstein, Attorney



Herbert Machtus, Journalist; Dr. David Berniker, Dentist

Part III

The "Kaiserwald" Concentration Camp Riga

I.

The name Mežaparks, or *Kaiserwald*, is familiar to every inhabitant of Riga. At one time it was for us the embodiment of the best and most beautiful things, for all of us had spent wonderful times there. Today *Kaiserwald* will remain in the memory of not just the Riga Jews but also many other European Jews who were taken there. For us, *Kaiserwald* is a large cemetery, a cemetery without graves...

Directly next to the railway that separates *Kaiserwald* from Sarkandaugava, in a large sandy plain and surrounded by a double fence of barbed wire, stands a new small town. Its name is: *Kaiserwald* Concentration Camp.

Two worlds stand face to face here. The first has magnificent villas, and everywhere happy voices are heard; but only screams and painful weeping are heard coming from the second. And when the new inhabitants of the Jewish villas, who inherited all our possessions, walked past us and saw our gray faces, they felt no sympathy whatsoever. They simply did not want to understand us.

The *Kaiserwald* concentration camp was the headquarters for all the large and small satellite camps in Riga and outside it. Because all these camps had been transformed into labor* camps, all of them were dependent on *Kaiserwald*. Thus administrators and guards from *Kaiserwald* could be found everywhere.

All of the satellite camps could now be located only outside the city, for in Riga itself people were supposed to know absolutely nothing about even the existence of the Jews.

For this reason, the large Gestapo satellite camp was moved into the Lenta factory compound on the other side of the Daugava as well.

The work crews of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp worked only in various factories and construction sites in the area.

* [Ed.: See letter dated August 18, 1943, shown in the new expanded edition of *Journey into Terror*, pp 154–159 by Getrude Schneider, pertaining to KZ *Kaiserwald* and *Nebenlager*. Only *Kaiserwald* is a concentration camp.]

The central labor-deployment office and the large card file, which contained the names of tens of thousands of prisoners, were also located in *Kaiserwald* and were managed by a German prisoner named Schlütter. For assistance he had the German Jew Bernhard, who felt genuine sympathy for the Jewish cause. He did good whenever possible. There was a special section of the card file for the names of those who were to be transferred from *Kaiserwald* to the SD.



Barracks of the Riga-Kaiserwald concentration camp

These people's SD cards meant simply that they would be sent to *Stützpunkt*. The work at *Stützpunkt* consisted of covering up the traces of all the murders, that is, digging up the corpses and cremating them. Afterwards those who had done this work were themselves eliminated. They were chained together, and none of them ever managed to return alive.

II.

Kaiserwald was built in March 1943. To build it, five hundred Aryan prisoners were brought in from the Sachsenhausen* concentration camp. The Jews from the nearby Wolf & Döring barracks camp were sent to assist them in the daytime. The Aryan prisoners had to work very hard under wretched condi-

* [Ed.: K.Z. Buchenwald]

tions, so their numbers shrank rapidly. When the Jews came to *Kaiserwald*, only 300 of the Aryans were still alive. The Jewish prisoners' numbers began with 501. The newly founded concentration camp was headed by the trained SS *Obersturmbannführer* Sauer (a brother-in-law of Professor Max Albert of Berlin). It was said that in civilian life he had owned a construction business. To assist him he appointed equally experienced murderers who had already been working for years at this "trade". All of them had thousands of human lives on their consciences.

Their names are: SS man Sorge ("Iron Gustav", a specialist in shots to the back of the neck), *Oberscharführer* Brüner (work deployment), Dr. Wisner* and Dr. Krebsbach (notorious for the "children's action"), Huck, Hirsch (from Bavaria), Maisel, Blatterspiegel, Kroeschel, Triebe (of the Estonia action), Schiller (from Siebenbürgen, i.e. Transylvania), Hoffmann (a notorious murderer), Schibbel, Schimmel, Laris, Fischer and others.

Our guards consisted of nearly a whole regiment of the "most efficient" SS people; most of them were natives of Transylvania. The ones whose presence we felt most harshly were the SS men Prater, Summer and Schwarz.

In the women's camp there were subordinate *SS-Mädels* (SS girls): Kowa (from Bavaria), a woman named Emma and a Latvian woman named Marija.

The German prisoner Rosenmayer was the first to be appointed as the camp representative; later he was replaced by the political prisoner Hans Bruns.

III.

After coming to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp, we were no longer called Jews but prisoners. We also lost our names and received only numbers on our chests and trousers, like criminals. We also wore the same number on the left trouser leg. Here the star, through which so many had lost their lives in the ghetto, was no longer used. Beside the numbers we also wore colored triangles on the left side of our chests. The Jews wore a yellow triangle, the Aryan political prisoners a red one, and the criminals a green one. There was also the BV sign, which stood for *Berufsverbrecher* (professional criminal).

In my time there were only seventy Aryan prisoners left in *Kaiserwald*, mostly Poles and Ukrainians. The German Aryan prisoners had a special status: they were the block elders or held other official positions. Moreover, they lived in a barrack that was separate from the others and received addi-

* [Ed.: Heinz Wisner was a medic, not a physician.]

tional rations.* The camp elder was responsible for the camp's internal affairs. He was in charge. The first camp representative, Reinhold Rosenmayer, showed his true colors from the very beginning. Later on he changed and became a veritable friend of the Jews. By contrast, the second camp elder, the political prisoner Hans Bruns, was sadistic in all his actions.

The second most important role in the camp was played by the notorious professional criminal Mister X. He was a good-looking slim man, and everyone in the camp trembled in fear of him. When he went off with a work crew as their foreman, he regularly brought many dead or half-dead men back with him. This elegant criminal had countless murders on his conscience. Consequently, he too came to a bad end: just before the liberation of Stutthof, where he was deploying work crews after the evacuation of Riga, he was murdered by the prisoners.**

His coworkers Vilsinger and Hannes were no better. The latter also died in Stutthof, on the electrified barbed wire.*** Just like Vilsinger and Hannes, the Polish foremen also showed us what they were capable of: they killed hundreds of prisoners, and for this reason the names Juzek and Bolek will remain unforgettable for us.

Because the Aryan prisoners wore striped suits we called them "zebras". The prisoners who held an office in the camp (that is, camp elders, Mister X, etc.) wore blue suits, round blue caps and high boots.

They wore numbers and triangles like all the others. They always made an effort to look especially elegant in order to appeal to the women in the women's camp. But in most cases they won the women's favors by exploiting their hunger and giving them food. There were some Aryan women among the prisoners in the women's camp, and they also wore striped suits and headscarves.

The sole authorities in the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp were the truncheon and the fist; nobody was allowed to complain about it. The system of regulations was the same as those of the notorious Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen concentration camps.

* [Ed.: The German prisoners had separate rooms in the men's barracks, but no barracks of their own.]

** [Ed.: Xavier Abel, Mr."X", was sent to the front, as part of the "Dirlewanger" Regiment.]

*** [Ed.: Both went to Dirlewanger's Regiment.]

IV.

The *Kaiserwald* concentration camp was divided into three parts. The first was the official part; then came the men's camp and the women's camp. At the entrance to the official part of *Kaiserwald* stood a large barrack for the guards. There the leaders of the work columns had to report their work crews. They were counted and in response to the order "Caps off!" they marched through the gate five abreast. The rules called for us to press our arms tight against our bodies, so that we looked like marionettes and were called "figures". We were no longer regarded as human beings.

In the official part of *Kaiserwald* stood the headquarters of the commandant, *Sturmbannführer** Sauer, and his entire staff. Across from it stood the SS kitchen and the guards' barrack. Jewish women and men worked in the SS kitchen. There was a special barrack that served as a clothing depot; it was headed by an SS man, and a large staff of Jewish women and men worked there. Because they sometimes found valuables sewn into the clothes that had been taken away from people, they were better off. The SS people took the good items from the clothing depot for themselves or sent them to their relatives in Germany.

The SS men had their own barber; his name was Fonarjow. Many women and men worked at the work stations (shoemakers' and tailors' workshops). There was even a mechanical workshop with a radio division (headed by the Itrow brothers). How often these men risked their lives by using an opportunity to listen to the radio so that they could cheer our despairing hearts with positive news reports!

The dentist Tscherfas and the dental technician Jevnowitsch headed the dental clinic. Across from it was the construction department, headed by the engineer B. Mischkinski. He was the actual builder of *Kaiserwald* and was looked upon with favor by Sauer. Nearby stood a large barrack that was used to receive "newly arrived guests". One needed only to enter it in order to realize immediately all the misery that awaited us. From this barrack people were led directly to the baths.

An especially large work crew, consisting mostly of women, worked in a barrack taking apart old and damaged telephones and telegraph machines. This was the Anoden work crew. The dirt and dust created by this work literally turned all the women black.

* [Ed.: Obersturmbannführer]

This was the official part of *Kaiserwald*.

V.

There were large residential barracks for the men. The plank beds stood three high, and two-story bunk beds stood at the sides. There were also barracks without plank beds or bunk beds, in which people had to sleep on sacks of straw or directly on the floor.

Each barrack had its own block elder. Opposite the barracks stood the large camp kitchen, in which women and men worked. There the German prisoners played the leading role. The kitchen was connected with a large washroom, and directly next to it was the delousing room. The infirmary was in another barrack. The Polish political prisoner Bolek, a physician from Lodz, was in charge there from the first day to the last. As for me, I always got along well with him during my time at *Kaiserwald*. He had a great deal of understanding for us and helped us whenever he could. Unfortunately, his opportunities to do so were fairly limited. Our Jewish doctors (Drs. Jakobsohn, Sick, Weinreich, Jawitsch and others) lived and worked together with him. The pharmaceutical department was headed by a Jew named Lipkin.

The men's camp was separated from the women's camp by a double barbed-wire fence. We were allowed to talk to one another only at certain times. It was possible to hand things back and forth by putting the package onto a board and extending the board over* the fence. Of course sometimes the package slid off and fell to the ground between the two fences. If the SS man noticed this happening, he would shoot immediately. Only the privileged prisoners - or, as we called them, "the VIPs" - were permitted to visit the women's camp.

The way to the women's camp was through a small gate before which an SS man stood. The prisoners had to doff their caps to every SS man, and if he wanted to say anything to us we had to halt three steps away from him and stand at attention. Probably this distance was required for security reasons.

In the women's camp stood the same kind of barracks that we had. The sanitation was very bad there. The block representatives were mostly German Jewish women. Across from the residential barracks stood a large laundry building and a bathhouse; the latter was called the "delousing station". There too, truncheons were in daily use. The pretty supervisor, the SS girl Kowa, who ornamented herself with stolen Jewish clothes and valuables, wielded the truncheon there and set the tone.

* [Ed.: underneath: The wire did not extend to the earth, but the fence was too high to use any other method.]

VI.

The transfer of the first Jews from the Latvian Ghetto and the German ghetto to *Kaiserwald* began in the second half of summer 1943. The liquidation of these two ghettos was apparently due to the revolts in the Warsaw and Bialystok ghettos and other ghettos. The decision-makers in the murderers' headquarters had decided to gradually phase out all the ghettos and house the Jews in concentration camps. There they came into the hands of trained SS people who made sure they were exterminated according to a predetermined program.

The closing of our ghetto in Riga was certainly accelerated by the weapons incident (see the chapter on the small Riga ghetto). People said that the SD, who were in fact the "hosts" of the German ghetto, and the area commissar, who had the command over us Latvian Jews, had not wanted to give up these "tasty morsels" under any circumstances. They, of course, were entitled by law to the wages we earned, as well as all our belongings.

For this reason the struggle between the SD and the area commissar's staff on the one side and the SS on the other lasted a long time. The SS won.

But before the final decision in this struggle was made, *Obersturmbannführer* Sauer came one day to the Small Ghetto. He brought with him several hardened criminals (zebras), headed by Mister X. They "organized" (stole) the tools from the ghetto workshops and took them to *Kaiserwald*.

The Jews marched in long rows from the ghetto to *Kaiserwald*. In extremely hot weather the women, men, and the few remaining children were driven along the streets of Riga from the Moscow suburb to *Kaiserwald*. Although many people fell by the wayside, nobody helped them. Each person was allowed to carry only a small bundle. The large items were transported from the ghetto by our drivers in either trucks or wagons. In addition to the guards, *Kommandant* Roschmann personally accompanied the first large transport of the Jews to *Kaiserwald*. When they arrived, the rows of Jews went into the concentration camp, but the luggage brought by the trucks and wagons was unloaded in a large barn in front of the gate. The Jews never saw it again. So they were left with only their small bundles, and that only temporarily.

The zebras came out to receive the "new guests". They slapped the new arrivals' faces for every small infraction of the rules.

The registration was done in the official part of *Kaiserwald*. Each person received his own card in the card file. After being ordered to hand over their valuables immediately – if they did not, the guards threatened to shoot them –

the people were also searched thoroughly. Many were even forced to undress. Whether they were men or women didn't matter.

The SS men, who were watching all this closely, jeered at the prisoners and beat them at will. Then the prisoners were led into the bathhouse for delousing.

The delousing procedure had certainly been precisely worked out by the "higher-ups", for it was the same in all the concentration camps I was in. The bathhouse, which was located in the women's camp, consisted of three rooms. The first was for undressing. All the clothes had to stay there and one could take along only one's boots and a razor, but only during the initial period. In the second room there was a piece of soap. It was produced by the notorious RIF company, which stood for *reines jüdisches Fett* (pure Jewish fat). We were allowed to wash ourselves with this soap, which was manufactured in the Danzig soap factory from the bones of our co-religionists. In the washroom there were only showers. These would not have been bad at all if we had been able to wash there, but we were only driven through them and beaten with truncheons on our naked bodies. We were then driven only half-soaped into the third room, which was for getting dressed.

While the women were washing themselves, high-ranking SS men appeared in order to see them naked. Often these sadists selected victims to beat up. Once I witnessed how several women with a small child were brought in from Pleskau. The SS men beat the defenseless women terribly. Even the desperate weeping and screaming of the child didn't stop them. In a word:

A bathhouse – a pleasure!

There was no such thing as drying oneself; we had to dry off in the air. Then came the distribution of "new clothes and underwear". The "new" clothes and underwear consisted of tattered old rags. Foot-rags were not always provided, so one had no choice but to stick one's bare feet into shoes or wooden clogs. Nothing was handed to us; everything was thrown at us. You had to put on whatever you got. It didn't matter whether the trousers, skirt or underwear were short or long, tight or loose. In a word, one came out of there looking like a total caricature.

When we looked at our comrades the laughter stuck in our throats. Before we could return to the barracks, there was still the procedure of painting us with white or yellow oil paint. Each person received a large cross in the front and back, and a stripe on the trouser legs and under the arms. In a word: suddenly you had the rank of a general.

Don't think about your clothes any more, they'll be taken immediately to the clothing depot to be deloused. If you've sewn something valuable into your clothes, don't worry about it; others will certainly take care of it.

VII.

In *Kaiserwald* the day began at midnight. We were awakened at four in the morning. A whistle from the block elder meant "wake up". Totally exhausted, lacking the sleep we needed, bitten by lice that had tormented us all night, we had only a few minutes to get dressed. It was still half-dark in the barrack, so you had to be an artist to find your own clothes. Quarrels broke out: one person was missing one thing, another something else.

The zebras came and roughly pulled out the prisoners who had to bring the coffee for the men's and women's camps from the kitchen. Those who refused were beaten with truncheons. Everything happened within minutes. Whether you had found all your clothes or were only half-dressed was disregarded. People ran to wash themselves in the small washroom, but not everybody did so. Many people whom one remembered as well-groomed and elegant men in the good old days had already deteriorated to such an extent that they no longer found it necessary to wash, and even slept in their dirty work clothes. Others avoided the washroom because they wanted to stay out of the truncheons' way.

The coffee arrived! Each person received it in a bowl that was often none too clean. A few minutes later a bell rang, which meant "Assemble for the morning roll call!"

We ran through the narrow barracks door and lined up in front of our block, always in rows of five. Everyone had to come out, even the small children. Those who had fallen ill during the night and were unable to walk to the infirmary were carried out and laid on the ground. Sometimes a child slept through the bell and stayed wrapped in his blankets. So all the plank beds were inspected closely.

The block elder was already looking over his block before the SS people came. "Eyes right, eyes left, and move! Caps off, caps on!" At this we had to click our heels together. Everything had to be done flawlessly, and woe to him who did it wrong. The truncheon was then put to use and blood would flow.

My block elder, a German BV (*Berufsverbrecher*, or professional criminal) named Vilsinger, was a great "artist" when it came to ordering us around. He had many victims on his conscience, for he tormented us more than most. Finally came the announcements about work assignments due to various deci-

sions made about the barracks etc. The prisoners no longer had names now, only numbers, so we were always called out by our numbers.

To end "the parade", the clerk made his report. We counted off; in the morning this roll call was done quickly so that the people could be released as soon as possible to go to work.

The bell rang again: roll call was over. The sick people went to the infirmary and the others to work.

In the women's camp there was the same procedure, the same blows, the same screaming.

VIII.

The work crews lined up on the large sandy square: the women in front, the men behind, everyone in rows of five abreast so that they could march on.

The prisoners were chosen for the individual work crews not by the labor deployment headquarters but by column leaders who had been specially appointed to these work crews. The column leader would make sure he received the necessary number of people. If he didn't want a certain person, he selected another one to take his place. The German prisoners accompanied the larger work crews as their foremen. The murderers Mister X, Hannes, Vilsinger and others made sure they brought back victims.

Once when a group of prisoners were working at a sawmill directly on the Daugava River, the elegant Mister X simply threw some Jews from the work crew into the water. As they were drowning he beat them with a wooden beam.

The work crews left the concentration camp. "Caps off, caps on!" We had to count off; a new group of guards joined the old one and the column would disappear behind the barbed wire, marching toward its work place. From the distance one could hear only the singing of Vilsinger's commando. That was the only work crew which was forced by this murderer to sing German songs.

The inhabitants of Sarkandaugava, past which the column marched, already knew the ragged and "singing Jews", who no longer made any impression on them at all.

Only the sick and those who worked in the camp remained there during the day.

IX.

The work crews from *Kaiserwald* were initially deployed at the NSKK, the *Luftwaffe* (air force) stations I and II, the Iļģuciems cement factory and various sawmills along the Daugava. There were also two privileged work crews made

up of specialists. The first one consisted of dentists and dental technicians. They worked at a dental clinic in the city. The other one consisted of mechanics, all of them specialists, who worked in the Vairogs factory. The column leader for the dental clinic was Dr. Noim, the column leader for Vairogs a German Jew. The dentists and dental technicians did not come into direct contact with the public, because they worked exclusively on a great variety of technical tasks. They received their meals at their work station. It was also possible for them to trade quite extensively. They came to *Kaiserwald* only to sleep, and they had a special sleeping area in the barrack. We Jews had only benefits from this commando, for their food could be distributed to hungry comrades. Before *Kaiserwald* was liquidated, the column leader Dr. Noim escaped directly from his work station. Thus he escaped the hell that we still had to go through.

Besides these, there were various other large and small work crews. The prisoners who remained in the concentration camp worked there on construction work, carpentry, in workshops and so on.

One work crew consisting of former lawyers could be seen in the painters' workshop. They had to paint the prisoners' numbers onto cloth. Yet another work crew included a certain Izke, who had to remove all the garbage (and was therefore called the "garbage chief"). The Jews who were not in any work crew hid in the barracks, latrines or washroom. They tried to avoid the SS people's notice at any cost. Woe to him who was discovered: his life was immediately on the line!

When sick and weak people came to *Kaiserwald* from the Dundaga barracks camp and elsewhere and there was no more room for them in the infirmary, they too would linger in the barracks. They looked like their own shadows. Later a recuperation block was opened for them, where they were supposed to recover. Here they were handed over to the Polish Aryan prisoner Bolek, who made sure they "recovered". He "cured" them very quickly by moving them from this world to the next.

The Aryan prisoners worked on the trucks that brought sand from the nearby hills to the camp; but Jews also helped to do this work.

X.

During the day the smaller children – there were many of them in *Kaiserwald* until they were taken away to Auschwitz* – also loitered in the blocks or ran

* [Ed.: The children were taken to the forest in the spring of 1944.]

around in the kitchens in order to pilfer things. They were most interested in potatoes, but also in wood for heating the small block stoves.

These little birds cooked not only for themselves but also for their fathers or mothers, who would come back hungry from a work crew. If they were seen cooking by an SS man who happened to enter the barrack, the SS man would throw away the food, unmoved by the wretched weeping of the four- or five-year-old boys. The SS man would shout at them. The boys would jump over the plank beds and search everywhere for a *maline* (hiding place).

Things would disappear, and so every prisoner made a large bag for himself to hold all his possessions, and he carried it with him always, even when he went to the latrine.

Before noon, Jews had to drag back to the camp the large field kettles that were used to bring lunch to the work crews outside the camp.

In these kettles, the things pilfered and traded by the work crews would then be smuggled into *Kaiserwald*. Lots of trading took place at the work places. In the mornings people would take along various items of clothing from the concentration camp to trade for bread or something else. The Aryan foremen, for example Hannes or Mister X, had good connections with people at the clothing depot, and at the work stations they traded the items for brandy and other good things to drink, not only for themselves but for the camp representative as well.

The camp elder was a notorious drunkard and was finally destroyed by his vice.

Twelve o'clock: a bell signaled noontime!

We ran out of all the workshops into the barracks, where the food was distributed. Everyone raced in from the individual camp work crews, including the large Anoden women's crew, as though they expected something special. We lined up in long columns with our bowls in our hands to receive our "meal". In my time, at the end of 1943, the rations were very bad. At noon we received a ladleful of turnip or cabbage soup that was always full of sand. Finding a potato in it was a special treat. But we rushed to line up for seconds without giving the slightest thought to the bad quality of the food. We were so starved that we even took in stride the blows we received as we stood in line.

Even as we ate, the bell was already ringing one o'clock: "Back to work!"

Because of the total inadequacy of the rations we were almost hungrier than before. In this condition, and weak and tired besides, we would go back to work.

XI.

After five o'clock the work crews deployed outside the camp began to return. Those who had not had lunch at their work stations outside *Kaiserwald* now went directly to the kitchen to get it there. The kettles containing the now totally cold food were put out on the street. Everything was eaten standing up, and then everyone went to his own block.

The workers were sometimes searched as they came in through the gate of the concentration camp. For this reason, the things they had pilfered or traded had to be well-hidden. But we had already gained a great deal of experience in this skill through our time in the ghetto. Nonetheless, it did not always work. Those who were caught hiding anything were brutally beaten and thrown into the bunker of the women's ghetto. The punishment was always a beating with truncheons on the lower part of the body. Whether the prisoner was a man or a woman didn't matter.

A bell rang: six o'clock! Assemble for the evening roll call! The same procedure as in the morning, except that now there was not so much hurry. Sometimes it lasted hours, and it didn't matter to the guards whether we were standing in the rain or the cold of winter.

There was always something out of order, either in the men's ranks or the women's. We were constantly being counted. People died like flies, but even this bothered nobody. Every day it was the same.

Those who died, died! The same fate for everyone! Finally things were "in order". The bell rang again: the roll call was over!

XII.

Now everyone ran and rushed into the barracks to "eat" and "rest". Everyone sat down in his assigned place at the narrow table. The table elder, who had received the rations from the block elder, distributed them according to a list. The ration for the whole day was 200 to 250 grams of bread with a bit of margarine or soft cheese. Once a week, on Sundays and holidays, we received a spoonful of sugar or syrup. Everything was washed down with hot black coffee, which was sometimes sweetened. Of course on such rations we could barely stand upright, much less work.

Those who had pilfered or traded something during their work now started to trade with it. In most cases it was only a couple of potatoes, bread, or other small items. Even bone marrow and similar waste products brought back by the slaughterhouse work crew were very much in demand. Everything was

spread on bread. Others bought items of clothing to trade at their work stations the next day.

But finally we had to go to sleep. The regulations called for us to take off our clothes, but not everyone did so. The clothes we had taken off were put on the dining table. Our shoes had to stand in a straight line parallel to the plank beds. Woe to him who didn't do this properly! Sometimes there was a foot inspection. But it was very difficult to have clean feet. How could feet covered with torn shoes or wooden clogs, which had to run around in filth constantly, stay clean? In any case, when dirty feet were discovered there was only one punishment: beatings on the naked buttocks.

Now began the battle with the lice. We would sit on our plank beds, pick them off and throw them directly at our neighbors, who did the same to us. We scratched our skin bloody, so our bodies were not only bitten but also scratched up. This torment went on until we fell asleep. Each one of us would have been happy to fall asleep forever. The women were no better off.

That is what a day in *Kaiserwald* was like.

XIII.

Again and again, the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp received fresh "material" in the form of new arrivals.

Two transports arrived from Vilno. The first one arrived in the fall of 1943 after the liquidation of the Vilno ghetto. It consisted of about 1,500 young women and about eighty men. The men were those who had hidden in *malines* (hiding places) during the liquidation of the Vilno ghetto and had subsequently been found. They were transported from the Rosse station, next to the old Jewish cemetery, under heavy guard by SS men carrying machine guns.

Before they were sent away, all of them had to watch the hanging of two men and a woman. One of the men was named Chwojnik; the other one, Lewin, was a member of the Jewish Social Democratic Bund party. The woman was 18 years old and was named Asja. They were killed for having shot a German group leader.

Then the women were divided into two groups: one group was made to stand on the right side, the other on the left. The women between 18 and 30 years of age were sent to the right to be transported away. The ones on the left were sent to the Panar, which was notorious in Vilno.

As the train containing the young women drove through the tunnel on the way to Riga, they assumed that they too would be taken to the nearby Panar.

For this reason, some of them threw themselves under the wheels of the moving train.

The cattle cars that had brought the new arrivals were shunted directly onto the tracks leading to *Kaiserwald*. The Jews of Vilno still had a great number of valuables with them. But when they saw *Kaiserwald* and the misery in store for them there, they threw their possessions into the latrines or buried them in the sand. Thus the *Kaiserwald* "VIPs" got hold of an especially tasty morsel, and this rich transport was talked about for a long time afterward.

After the Kajlis factory in Vilno had been liquidated, the second transport came from there to *Kaiserwald*. Two more transports from Daugavpils came in the fall of 1943 and at the end of that year.

About one hundred Polish Jews arrived from the small Lithuanian town of Olea.* Their home town was the industrial city of Sgerz in the Lodz district. Because they had been prisoners since 1939, they had already been through countless camps, and so they were no longer impressed by *Kaiserwald* in any way. The head of their work crew was Ignatz, whom we got to know better in Magdeburg later on.

Individual women and children had been gathered together in Pskow and the occupied areas of the East and brought to *Kaiserwald*. All of the new arrivals were distributed among the various work crews.

A large group of Hungarian Jewish women were in *Kaiserwald* for only a short time. They were sent on to Spilve, and after that point all traces of them have been lost. This group turned up in the middle of 1944, in a very poor condition.

I found out later that these women had not been registered in the *Kaiserwald* card file.

Kaiserwald provided the human material for all the new satellite camps and for the establishment of small concentration camps. As early as the summer of 1943 the first work crews came from there to the Sloka paper factory, where they had to work under very bad conditions.

Jews were also sent to do a variety of peat-cutting work, harvest sugar beets, and work in the sugar beet factory in Jelgava. A large transport, consisting mostly of Jews from Vilno, was sent to Estonia. They worked in the stone quarries there for the petroleum factories and came to a tragic end in the Klooga camp and other *klogendigen* (wretched) camps. This transport included

* [Ed.: Perhaps the author meant Lioliai.]

Löwenstein, Glück, the Glücksmann brothers, Feldhuhn and many other Latvian Jews.

A women's satellite camp was set up in the VEF factory, and an extermination camp was set up in Dundaga (see the chapter on the satellite camps).^{*} Everyone who returned from there was already half-dead. A gravediggers' commando was also set up. This commando had to bury the concentration camp's dead, wrapped in paper sacks, in the Matīsa Cemetery (see the chapter on the Central and Terminal prisons).

During the day, prisoners from all the satellite camps came to *Kaiserwald* to get their rations and clothing from the central administration. They also took this opportunity to go to the infirmary and the dental clinic.

These people were a kind of liaison staff between the work crews and the camp inhabitants. They carried messages and "mail" (notes) in and out. If any of them was caught doing so, his end was certain, for according to the code of the concentration camp, this crime was punished by death.

XIV.

Vilno – Vilno! I don't know whether it is appropriate to mention the city of Vilno, which was holy to us, in the chapter of my book that deals with the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. I do so because Vilno became a veritable part of *Kaiserwald*.

In Lithuania, Vilno was the embodiment of the city of Jerusalem. For us Jews, Vilno was like a mother who had raised us, it was a holy mecca, and everyone who was concerned with specifically Jewish matters or with Jewish literature had spent a shorter or longer part of his life there.

Which of our significant writers had not once lived and worked in Vilno? The names of our "great ones", such as Professor Simon Dubnow, the *Achad-Haam* (leading wise man) Oscher Ginsburg, Lewande, Ruwim Breinin and many, many others are closely bound up with this city.

Vilno was the meeting place of the greatest Jewish personalities of Russia and other foreign countries. There one could meet Rabbi Mazo, Usischkin, Baron Ginzburg and others. All the important consultations took place in this city, all decisions were made there, and the projects for the publication of various Jewish and Hebrew writings (Hamelitz, Hayom and others) also originated in Vilno.

^{*} [Ed.: Dundaga was to be a resort and spa for the SS, built from scratch. There was an extremely high death rate, but it was not an extermination camp per se. There were no "extermination" camps in Latvia, even though thousands of Jews were exterminated.]

How strongly Jewish religious life pulsed here! It was, after all, the city of the great Vilno *gaon* (leading rabbinical scholars)! The magnificent, unique synagogue rose out of the tangle of narrow streets of the Vilno ghetto of former and present times. In it the famous *zadik* (holy man) had learned and taught. How many unique and special things were contained in the synagogue courtyard alone! Just as every Catholic's duty was to visit the holy Ostra Brama when he came to Vilno, so was the great *gaon* synagogue a place of pilgrimage for us Jews.

Secular Jews founded in Vilno the greatest institute of Jewish studies, called the YIVO. All the treasures of Jewish art and literature were collected there, and they were destroyed* along with the rest of Jewish Vilno.

In these notes I must not fail to mention the names of Dr. Zemach Schabad and Dr. Wigodski. It may be that I too owe my life to these well-known Vilno personalities.

I would also like to remind the reader of the names of the great Jewish artist Antokolski and the tragicomedian Motke Chabad, and of the great Jewish library of Straschun.

Today Jewish Vilno exists no more. Today Vilno is synonymous with Panar (where many thousands of Jews were killed); this name belongs together with those of *Kaiserwald*, Klooga (Estonia), and later on the Stutthof, Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps. The Vilno Jews too owe their deaths for the most part to the local Lithuanian population.

The old city was badly damaged, but Jewish Vilno was totally destroyed.

XV.

On 25 November 1943 it was my turn: I had to go to *Kaiserwald*!

A large eight-ton open truck took me together with the rest of the Jews from the already liquidated Small Ghetto into this new world.

Besides the usual guards, our new "host" – the supreme commander of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp, *Obersturmbannführer* Sauer – drove alongside us in a beautiful small private car.

We said farewell to our ghetto from afar.

Once more, the memory of all the bloodshed and suffering we had experienced there pierced us like a bolt of lightning.

In my thoughts I said farewell to the old Jewish cemetery.

* [Ed.: A good part of the YIVO library was saved and is now located in New York.]

I said farewell to my mother's grave and the unknown graves of my wife and my family.

We drove through the city of Riga, which was now in half-darkness. I didn't grant it a single look.

The city in which I had spent the best years of my life and which had drawn me back repeatedly, wherever I might be, no longer interested me.

All of us had only one thought in our heads: *Kaiserwald, Kaiserwald, Kaiserwald!*

XVI.

We saw from afar the lights of the small town of *Kaiserwald*, and in a few minutes we had passed through the gate of the cruel concentration camp. Our truck drove up to the large "reception barrack", and we started to unload the things we had brought with us from the ghetto. When our *chewre* (young men) saw the new guests, they fell like wild beasts on our possessions. Of course the notorious Vilno boy Zorechke was among them, as always.

The zebras also showed up immediately with the registrar, and our registration began. We stood in long lines, and each person had to endure a body search. Everything we had hidden or carried on us was taken away from us and was lost to us forever. Then the SS man Brüner, who headed the labor deployment department, came and announced that all valuables – gold, money and the like – had to be handed over. Disobedience would be punished by death. Finally it was my turn to be registered: I lost my name and now was called

Prisoner No. 13122.

The camp elder also came to inspect us. I used this opportunity to make contact with him, using the agreed-upon code word (see the chapters on the satellite camps and the billeting department). He explained to me that he was in the know and that everything was all right. However, at that moment I did not have much faith in him, for he was drunk, as always. But in time he did do some things for me, after all.

Because it was already late, we were not sent to be deloused; thus we avoided a beating and were able to keep our own clothes. Now we went directly to the roll call; the reader already knows well enough what went on there. After that we were chased into our barrack. I was assigned to Block No. 4.

In the barrack it was a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah; everyone was screaming as though it were a railroad station. Most people were standing up,

since there was hardly any room to sit down. Of course I saw many faces I knew from the ghetto. But nobody paid attention to anyone else, people were strangers to one another, everyone had countless cares and thought mainly of his own stomach. The inmates' appearance was indescribable; they looked just like *tschutschalos* (scarecrows).

They chased us to the place where food was distributed. In one place there was a little piece of bread, at another a bit of cheese, and at the next black coffee. The block elder, a Romanian Jew who had an especially bad character, ordered us around and dealt out blows generously. We remembered his behavior well, and just a month later we made sure he disappeared for good. His helper Rotberg only shouted, "This is a concentration camp, there's no mercy here!"

We had to eat in great haste, and we newcomers as yet had no idea what to do. I saw my acquaintances the Dr. Jawitsch brothers, the lawyer Berger and others. The same evening, sixty more persons arrived from the ABA (Army Clothing Department) satellite camp, including the engineer Schlossberg, Plonski, Ratz and others.

Now we were chased to our sleeping quarters, but where does one sleep if there are no beds? In one corner there was only a bunk bed for the block representative and his helper. The rest of us had to lie on the floor. Sacks of straw and blankets were distributed, but two to three people had to share a sack of straw and a blanket. Others had to lie on the bare floor without any covering at all. I too had received nothing at all, but I did manage to get a place under a table. The floor was indescribably dirty, but what could a person do?

As I lay under my table, I thought everything over and concluded that I had probably made a huge mistake, and perhaps even committed a sin, by not having ended my life together with my family. My son, who had already left everything behind him, seemed enviable to me. And as I looked around me and saw how all of these people had changed during the past few months, it became clear to me that here there was nothing but destruction, for nobody could survive it.

Sunk in thought as I was, I had not noticed at all that my acquaintance Professor Lemberger from Vienna was lying beside me. When he turned over on his other side he recognized me and called me by name. This splendid human being had become a shadow of his former self during the short time since he had left the German ghetto. The only words he said to me were: "Kaufmann, I have no more strength. I want to die!" I could understand him well.

I spent my first night in *Kaiserwald* thinking over these words.

XVII.

The next morning, after the general roll call there was another roll call for the new arrivals in the barrack. A satellite camp crew for Dundaga was put together. I too was assigned to it. After I had already gotten into the line for this work crew, the camp elder came over. He saw me and immediately pulled me out of this work crew. He also explained to the head of the labor deployment group (Schlütter) that I was not to be assigned to any outside work crew without his knowledge. So I stayed in the camp for the time being, and I have to admit that in this manner my life was saved. I was now assigned to another block, No. 3, and there I sat, initially without any work to do. I realized that I had a real source of support in the camp elder, and so I thought about how I could exploit this fortunate situation to help my unfortunate brothers as well. I immediately went to the infirmary to find out about the conditions there.

A hideous picture met my eyes. I saw there good acquaintances of long standing who were emaciated to the point of being mere skeletons and were waiting to die of starvation. My friend Rabinowitsch ("Kniaz") was also lying there. The only word he could stammer when he saw me was "Save!" Another comrade, Nitschun, who had lost his foot, also cried out, "Save!", and then this call for help sounded from all directions: "Save, save!" These were the people who had returned from Dundaga. There were also returnees from Dundaga in the barracks. Like shadows, they sat in their corners and waited for death. Among them I saw the friends of my youth: Woltschok, Borkon and others – all of them were skeletons! I had only one thought in my head: what can I do, how can I help them?

During this period I still had a small source of aid: I had left various things in the women's AEG barracks camp, and thanks to Mrs. Burian (from Prague) they were sent to me. I had the outside work crews get a loaf of bread for me every day so that I could distribute it in the camp. When the outside work crews saw my spirit of enterprise, they regularly brought me potatoes as well. Because I even had the opportunity to cook them, I could send mashed potatoes for 25 to 30 persons to the infirmary every day as long as I was in *Kaiserwald*. I will never forget how my comrades looked the first time I took this small bit of food to them, and as I sit here and write about it now I have burning tears in my eyes.

There was screaming and moaning from all directions: "Kaufmann, me! Kaufmann, me too!" But how could I give something to everyone? I helped with everything I could manage to scavenge, whether it was a needle and

thread or something I had managed to get from the clothing depot, where I had already made connections, and so on.

The poor people always got diarrhea from the food and had no possibility of changing their dirty clothes. Now I dragged these things around in order to trade them, if possible, for another shirt or another pair of trousers. I was a great help to the German Jews too, because I made no distinction whatsoever between all these unfortunate people. If I was turned down at one place, I went undiscouraged to the next one until I had gathered together what I needed for the others. And many were willing to meet me halfway, because they saw my *msiras nefesch* (self-sacrifice) for a good cause. But my financial reserves were not great, so they were soon at an end. How could I go on helping now? – I organized a collection in one corner of the barrack, and I invited to it all the wealthy people from the outside work crews, the dental clinic and so on. Thus I managed once again to get some money to buy bread for the hungry ones. The people who worked in the outside work crew at the slaughterhouse also gave me support. They would get brains for me, which we added to the meals for the sick and the weak to make them a bit more substantial.

XVIII.

The block elder Vilsinger (an Aryan) tormented us constantly, and my talking to him didn't make any difference. He beat us murderously, and on top of that he claimed he was taking good care of us. One day old Resnik (a timber dealer) was punished with a beating after a foot inspection, and the same thing happened to many others. It was heartbreaking to see all this happening without being able to help!

Once there was an alarm during dinner and everyone had to vacate the barracks. The zebras were standing at the doors with large truncheons and they used these to beat us about the head. Screams! The whole barrack was vandalized. By the time a person had gotten out, he had tripped over beaten, bloody, fallen human beings. The children wailed, and those who were able jumped out the windows to save themselves. We were ordered to gather in the square, and there a moral sermon was delivered to us, to the effect that we had to improve our behavior and so on. The comrades told us that this event had been nothing compared to what had happened the previous month. That night, which the prisoners called the *slichot* night (a sleepless night spent praying), had cost many human lives.

In other barracks the conditions were no better than in ours. There I met many acquaintances again, for example Landau, the director of the Schere-

schewski cigarette factory. All of them were barely recognizable. My comrade Schelkan and others had moved to other barracks camps. Everyone was trying to get out of this hell in any way he could, for this was the worst period at *Kaiserwald*. During this time, the notorious *Stützpunkt** was set up. Initially, those who were to be transported to it were fetched from the concentration camp by a large group of guards carrying machine guns. Later on, the same group of guards waited for the transports at the gate, so as not to cause any agitation in the camp.

Once – it was a Saturday, a holiday on which we didn't have to work – we Jews celebrated Hanukkah (the festival of Chasmonaea) and *Shabbat rosch-chojdesch* (the first Saturday of the month). I organized two religious services in our barrack. Cantor Serensen prayed in one corner and the cantor from Hanover (who had the voice of a giant) in another. All the others were standing, praying and weeping. Afterward a *Hazkoro* (prayer of commemoration) was spoken and those present said *Kaddish* (the prayer for the dead).

Everyone truly did say *Kaddish*!

XIX.

I had never experienced a harsher winter than that of 1943. I clearly saw my destruction before me. Nobody was interested in the political news any longer, and because I myself cannot remember it as well as the news we received in the ghetto period, I will skip over it here.

At that time, not only the German Jewish elite of the ghetto but also the former police chief Haar were brought to the concentration camp. The VIPs were received by us with many beatings, in accordance with their earlier behavior toward us. Unfortunately, Haar was unassailable. He was brought by *Kommandant* Roschmann personally and delegated to a work crew by Sauer. Because the German Aryan prisoners regarded Haar as a rival, they agreed to get him out of the way. This decision was implemented on New Year's Eve 1943/44.

Haar was invited to a small New Year's Eve party organized by the Aryan prisoners. In the middle of the night they dragged him to the latrine and tried to drown him in the filth. A former boxer, he reportedly defended himself fiercely. After he had been pulled out of the latrine half-dead, he was killed for good. The ones who did it were the murderer Mr. X and the Pole Bolek. We

* [Ed.: Usually, ten men were taken to the forest, where they disinterred earlier victims and burned them. They were replaced by new crews every few days, after having been killed.]

Jews did not regret this death in the least, for we had not forgotten various things Haar had done to us during those difficult times. The following morning Sauer showed up to investigate the incident, but the investigation came to nothing. Haar was wrapped in a paper sack like the other corpses and taken to the Matīsa Cemetery to be buried.

At the end of January 1944 the director of the *Heereskraftfahrpark* or HKP (Army Vehicle Park) was brought to the concentration camp. A new department of the HKP, called the Park, was established, and I was appointed to be the foreman of the work crew. I did not want to accept this position under any circumstances, although the conditions in *Kaiserwald* were especially bad at that time. But the misery and suffering there gave me no rest. There was no help for it, I had to go. In the evening, when all the inmates of our barrack had gathered together and everyone knew I was about to leave *Kaiserwald*, the German Jews started to thank me with long speeches for all the good I had done them, and they were followed by all the others. Afterwards, as I spoke a few words of farewell all of the barrack's inmates stood up as one. Tears choked my voice and I could scarcely speak. What I had done was my duty, but unfortunately I could not fulfill it as I had wished to do. I saw before me the sick people lying in the clinic. The next day they would wait in vain for a bit of hot food.

But I could not stay. I was compelled to leave *Kaiserwald*, and I thought that perhaps in my new position I could once again do just as much for my brothers as before. "Very many" of those who were in my block at that time, and with whom I shared countless difficult experiences, survived – that is to say, one single comrade, Niburg, and I.

While I was writing this chapter, I happened to meet Niburg again here in Germany. I invited him to visit me and I read these lines aloud to him. Because we were the only surviving witnesses of those events, that time appeared again clearly before our eyes.

The next morning I was taken away to my new work place. I did not return to *Kaiserwald* until about three quarters of a year later, as a hostage.

XX.

The mortality rate in *Kaiserwald* was especially high until the spring of 1944. Several small transports of children and older people to Treblinka and Auschwitz took place.* The summer was somewhat easier in the camp, and the camp

* [Ed.: The transports went to the forest, not to Treblinka or Auschwitz. The Treblinka extermination camp had been liquidated in early fall of 1943, and Auschwitz in 1944 was bursting

administrators decided to dig up all of the sandy soil and to plant gardens. After doing a great deal of work in the outside *Kommandos*, people now had to do heavy labor at the camp in the evenings too. People planted and laid cobblestones. The stones for this work were fetched from the new Jewish cemetery. Our Jews were forced to destroy the graves of their brothers and demolish the gravestones. Bricks from the burned Gogol synagogue were also used.

The crew of the notorious *Stützpunkt* was working with extraordinary intensity at that time, and small groups were transported there every week. The front was moving closer, and the traces of the murders had to be erased as fast as possible. The following acquaintances of mine were taken to the *Stützpunkt*: Berel, Schulkin, Wolfsohn, Weinberg, Rips, Awsej Gurwitsch, Junowitsch, Kaufmann, Borowski and others.

Because of his drinking, the camp elder Rosenmeyer was also taken away. For us Jews his departure was a misfortune. Although he had treated us badly in the beginning, he took good care of us later on, and during the final period he tried to do whatever he could for us. His job was taken over by the Aryan political prisoner Hans Bruns, and under him we suffered badly once again.

At that time one of the Jewish policemen - or "mobile work units", as they called themselves - managed to attain a certain position in the camp, and another man, Grischa Altschuler, became a *Rädelsführer* (ringleader). I can not explain precisely the role the two of them played at that time, but the fact that Altschuler possessed a great deal of gold when he was arrested and sent to the *Stützpunkt* doesn't exactly speak in his favor. On the way to the *Stützpunkt* he reportedly tried to flee, but was chased down and shot dead.

In the meantime, one of our young men came to be suspected of betraying us. According to reports he had told the overseers that the Jews were wearing other clothes under their striped prisoners' suits so that they could escape at any time. It was decided to eliminate this young man, whose name was Arschon. This mission was undertaken by Harry Kussmann, Bubi Mischinski and the Czech Jew Ludwig, an electrician. They threw a blanket over Arschon, carried him half-suffocated to the latrine, and forced him to hang himself from a noose that had already been prepared for him there. When "*Herr Kommandant*" heard of this incident, he ordered the corpse to be dug up again and an autopsy to be made. As a punishment, eight Jews were sent to the *Stützpunkt*. But the true culprits were not found.

at the seams. In fact, in May 1944, 5000 Jewish women arrived at Kaiserwald directly from Auschwitz.]

The barbers (Zijuni and others) also had a lot to do in *Kaiserwald* by the end of the summer. Everyone's hair was cropped very short and a stripe was shaved down the middle of their heads. The women's hair was shaved off completely. Only the privileged ones who wore blue caps were not subjected to this *gezeire* (affliction).

Political events started to happen in a rush, and the front came closer and closer. The camp administrators started to think about what should be done with the Jews and when they had to begin evacuating them. They decided to liquidate the old and the weak ones and to transport those who could still work to labor camps in Germany. "*Aktionen*" were carried out in all the satellite camps and in *Kaiserwald* (see the chapter on the satellite camps). The people were taken from the liquidated barracks camps directly to *Kaiserwald*, and from there to points further on.* Among these unfortunates were the Kor brothers, who managed to survive by sheer accident.

The organizers of all these *Aktionen* were Dr. Krebsbach, Dr. Wisner,** Hirsch and others. The barber Fonarjow from *Kaiserwald* told me that the SS people would return from these *Aktionen* with their faces completely scratched up. On the way there, our Jewish women had flung themselves at the guards and attacked their faces with their nails and teeth. According to reports, there was even a shoot-out, which once again cost people their lives. When Fonarjow asked the SS people quite naively why they had such scratched-up faces, they answered: "That's the handiwork of Jewish women!"

There were also reports that these Jews had written little notes in Latvian and that these notes had been found. These notes read: "Latvians, save us!" But these appeals were directed to the wrong people. Some of the victims were gassed*** and others were sent to the Biķernieki forest and killed there.

XXI.

Most of the survivors of *Kaiserwald* were transported to Germany on 6 August 1944. They were sent together with the prisoners from the other satellite camps in the large transport ship Bremerhafen via Danzig to the Stutthof concentration camp. Only about 1,500 people, men and women, remained in the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. I too returned to *Kaiserwald* as a hostage, to-

* [Ed.: to the forest]

** [Ed.: Wisner was a medic, not a physician.]

*** [Ed.: As there were no gas chambers in Riga, he must mean the gas vans, which were left over from 1942.]

gether with four comrades from my satellite camp. The reason I was a hostage was connected with the escape of our elder at that time, the Czech Jew Steuer. After having to sit in the bunker for several days, we were released and selected to serve in the "*potato commando*" (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža). Luckily, through a coincidence I was able to stay in *Kaiserwald*.

By comparison to earlier times, our concentration camp had become a veritable "paradise" (and thus the words once spoken by our ghetto representative Leiser "came true"). In the first place, the SS leader at that time, Schimmel, was a relatively decent human being; and secondly, we were put into work crews that were very convenient for us, since in them we could scavenge and steal all kinds of things. I was once again assigned to my former block, whose elder was Funkelstein. Except for a few old German prisoners, none of the earlier zebras remained. During this time a German boy (Benja) in our block went insane and was immediately liquidated by the concentration camp administrators.

Finally, only a single work crew was put together out of all the former work crews, with a day shift and a night shift. We worked in the harbor unloading ships. Although I had learned all kinds of new trades during my time in the concentration camp, this activity was still completely new to me, but finally I became a dockworker too. The work was by no means easy and one needed a fair amount of practice to master it. But a person can get used to many things, and after a time it even seemed easier to me, through practice, to unload large bombs weighing 300 to 400 kilos than to do other things.

Our VIPs granted access to the food supplies only to those who were really good at scavenging. Everything was on offer, starting from cigarettes and shoes to the best liquors. The SS people were also extraordinarily interested in the ships' cargos and took a large proportion of them for themselves.

The final nights were quite "jolly". The Russian air force was in constant action and dropped many bombs. The flak-throwers responded, and our barracks rocked so hard that we expected them to collapse at any moment. At that time the front was already at Baldone, 40 kilometers from Riga. *Kommandant* Sauer tried to "save the day" by setting up a special company of SS men to be sent immediately to the front. Our camp elder Bruns and Mr. X were also sent to the front. (We were not sad about this!) But this "first aid" was to no avail, for Riga was completely surrounded by the Russians. At this time some of our people escaped from the work crew in the harbor. Mrs. Dolgitzer and her daughter were the last women of *Kaiserwald* who tried to save themselves by escaping.

There was a lot of talk about how our "father", the *Kommandant*, would arrange to have a ship take us deeper into the Reich. And in fact the day did come when we were taken to the harbor and put onto a ship. Now only a very small work crew remained in *Kaiserwald*, and once again several of its members escaped (Harry Niss, Slowin and others). A couple of them were caught and shot (Michlin and others). This work crew was later enlarged by adding to it the people returning from the Park satellite camp. But then all of them together were sent to Germany.

Kaiserwald, bloody *Kaiserwald*!

How much pain, suffering, and human lives it cost!

Kaiserwald has an especially important place in the history of suffering, the martyrology, of the Jewish *kibbutz* (community).

Today* *Kaiserwald* is a camp for German prisoners of war. The commander is a Russian officer, the Jew Michalowitsch.

The soil of *Kaiserwald* is soaked with our blood!

Today this soil is being walked on by prisoners of war.

Kasernierungen Small Satellite Camps

After the Germans had occupied Riga, the Jews were deployed to do various types of work. The regular army, or *Wehrmacht*, the civilian administrative bodies, and even the Gestapo – all of them used the Jews for hard physical labor. It was convenient for them to use the Jews, not only because of their abilities and intelligence, but also because the Germans could speak to them in their own language. Professionals and skilled craftsmen were installed in newly created workshops, and these workshops were set up in all the units for every craft. Later on, the so-called marching commandos were lodged wholly or partly in satellite camps so that they could be exploited more intensely. After the first large-scale extermination action had been carried out in the Small Ghetto and the Jews consequently no longer felt secure there, they developed a veritable psychosis about the satellite camps.

And now I will give the readers a look at these barracks camps,* which later were transformed into *Aussenlager* or *Kasernierungen* that were more or less branches of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp.

* [Ed. Kaufmann refers to 1945, 1946, and 1947.]

a) "Gestapo" Later the "Lenta" Satellite Camp

During the very first days after Riga had fallen into the Germans' hands, the Gestapo fetched people from the police headquarters to be "used" for all kinds of hard labor. Gradually a permanent work crew consisting of men and women was created. Lew Aronsohn-Arnou was appointed *Oberjude* (head Jew). Whereas the Jewish men were forced to do the hardest physical labor, the women had to clean and scrub the SD men's apartments. Over time, the specialized craftsmen were picked out of the men's group and workshops were set up for them. Specialists were even brought out of the Central Prison. The man in charge of all Jewish affairs was the SD man Scherwitz.

The tailor Boris Rudow, who was well-known in Riga, was used in the tailoring shop. He proved so capable in his work that he was appointed head of the workshop. Very quickly he won the trust of the Jews who worked there.

The crafty Scherwitz, who was then still low in rank, quickly sized up the situation and realized that the right moment had come to make himself a fortune through the Jews. He took away Arnou's position as *Oberjude* and put Boris Rudow in his place.

A short time later, Scherwitz decreed that Rudow no longer had to wear the Star of David. He did this so that when Rudow visited the "higher-ups" for fittings he would not look like a Jew.

During this time a woman from Lodz, Poland, was working as a cleaner in the marching column. Her name was Tamara Schermann. Scherwitz noticed her because she was pretty, and he appointed her to clean his apartment. She too had to take off her star while she was working.

Scherwitz had commandeered a special building on Lielā Maskavas Street for his Jews and their families. Shortly before the liquidation of the ghetto, the marching column was housed in Washington Square and Peterholm Lane. It was mostly wealthy Jews who managed to get into this satellite camp. Genuine skilled craftsmen were put into this work crew to cover for those who were not craftsmen.

The clever Rudow sized up the situation very quickly, and Scherwitz, to whom he was a great help, decided to "Aryanize" him. Rudow now claimed

* [Ed.: The name barracks camp is freely translated from *Barackenlager*, and even though every *Barackenlager* was a labor camp, not every labor camp consisted of barracks; Jews were housed in stone buildings as well. Kaufmann called it "Kasernierungslager" and it was erroneously translated into Barracks Camps. (See Kaufmann's book, p. 365)].

he had been a foundling who had merely been taken in by Jews. Aryan papers were provided for him and Miss Schermann. These two could now move about the city in absolute freedom. But Rudow remained "passionately Jewish" in his heart. He understood the infinitely difficult situation of his coreligionists and helped them whenever he could. He even managed to employ his father and his brothers, under another name, in his commando.

His position as the elder of the Jews was now taken over by a certain Schönberger from Jelgava. Meanwhile, Rudow the "Aryan" was appointed supervisor of the workshops. Whenever he made a tour of inspection together with the higher-ups, he always made sure everyone knew about the inspection in advance. Those tanners and tailors who had never before held a needle in their hands now suddenly looked like masters of their respective crafts. The same thing happened in all the other workshops. Rudow would show up, accompanied by his supervisors; he spoke to the Jews only with his voice raised, but winked at them in secret so they would know they had nothing to fear.

After the arrival of the Jewish transports from Germany, all the suitcases that had been brought along were immediately confiscated and taken to the Gestapo. There the contents were sorted by Jews especially appointed to do this work. This was a work station where people could "organize" various things for themselves, for often valuables worth a considerable amount of money had been sewn into the clothing. Although the Jews in this work crew were inspected from time to time, Scherwitz always made sure they were covered. Nonetheless, sometimes there were arrests that ended with prison. In any case, the Gestapo satellite camp (later: Lenta) was the best one by far.

Once a small group of Jews was sent to work at another SD camp in Pleskau (Pskow). In this group were Rudow's brother, Dr. Rudow, and the woman dentist Dr. Kirschbaum. The two of them did not return to the Gestapo but instead were sent to the Small Ghetto. After the great "weapons incident" in the ghetto, the Gestapo work crew also had victims to mourn for.

The whole family of the Riga interior decorator Rosenstein, as well as Konrad Treister, Stupel, Jakobsohn and Miss Ebi Kaufmann from Berlin were taken to prison and died there (see the chapter on the Small Ghetto).

While Scherwitz was on a business trip to Paris, the SD men decided to get rid of the "Aryan" Tamara Schermann, who was called "Esther Ha Malka", an allusion to the biblical Queen Esther. She was arrested and put in prison. Only with a great deal of effort was Scherwitz able to get her released after his re-

turn. At that point he sent her to the Reich.* Her luck continued and, as far I have heard, she is still alive.

After the liquidation of the Small Ghetto, when everything was put under the command of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp, the Gestapo barracks camp was also changed into a small *Kasernierung*. The workshops were moved to the Lenta factory on the other side of the Daugava, and the work crews were enlarged by adding to them people from the Small Ghetto and the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. From that day on, the unit was no longer called the Gestapo satellite camp; it was called Lenta.

It took a fairly long time to remove all the machines from the Lenta factory and transform it into a residence hall. Wiskind (who was later arrested) was appointed business manager, and Herzenberg from Libau became the chief supervisor. Now a Jewish police force was set up, consisting mostly of German Jews. Among them was a certain German Jew named Lewi, who was sent to *Stützpunkt* because he was making trouble for his coreligionists. Others were also sent there as hostages because of various crimes (Jakobsohn, Steingold and others). Roschmann also granted "housing" in Lenta to the elite of the German Jews (Leiser and Dr. Aufrecht).

Under the rule of this *Kommandant* Roschmann the camp's inmates experienced especially difficult times. This was why various inmates – for example Firkser, the Jutters (father and son), Schneider (of the Makkabi sports club) and others – escaped to Dobeles in Kurzeme. Of these, Jutter Jr. and Schneider were shot by the Latvian Aizsargi shortly before the liberation. Later, Schloma Koblenz and his brother, Traub, Rotbard and others also escaped. As a collective punishment, the lovely gray suits were striped with white oil paint, the men had a stripe shaved down the middle of their heads, and the women had all their hair cut off. Others were arrested, sent to prison and murdered there. The only person who died a normal death, of a heart attack, was Hirschmann from Jelgava. In spite of the hopeless situation, a small Jewish religious center was formed. There people studied the holy scriptures, the Talmud, and observed the holidays (Golowtschiner, Joffe, Borchowik and others).

Our artists Schelkan, Schalit, Aronsohn, Sperling-Tschuzhoj and others also tried through their art to help us get through difficult hours.

Over time, the Jews in the Gestapo satellite camp in Lenta were joined by others from Daugavpils and Vilno (e.g. Sienitzki the gardener).

* [Ed.: According to rumors, Tamara was taken to Paris by Scherwitz and she survived there.]

As soon as one murderer was transferred elsewhere, a new one took his place. In any case, no Jew from Lenta will ever forget the names of the SD men Jenner, Nickel and Daiber.

As the Russians were approaching Riga, another period of escapes began (Ritow, Schetzen and others). Three young men were among those who tried to escape. In the course of this attempt Schenker and Chone Glaser were shot. Schenker was buried in Lenta, but after the liberation he was dug up and re-buried in the Jewish cemetery. The only one who succeeded in escaping was Nioma Gutkin.

After the Russians had occupied Jelgava, the "Aryan" Boris Rudow also disappeared. He was liberated by the Russians, but unfortunately he was later arrested by them. Some of the Jews, about 105 of them, were transferred from Lenta to Salaspils and from there to *Kaiserwald*. Most of them were sent to the notorious "*potato commando*" (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža), where they died. Most of the others were transported by ship to Germany. The rest, about eighty people, were taken to Liepāja, accompanied by Scherwitz. There they were thrown into prison. Many were killed there in the bombardments (Jascha Zimmermann, Mulja Nowik, Leo Friedmann, Herzberg, Kleinstein and others). Only a few were able to escape to Sweden by ship.

That was the end of the Jewish satellite camp that was initially known during the German occupation of Riga as Gestapo and later as Lenta.

b) H.K.P (Heereskraftfahrpark – Army Vehicle Park)

After Riga was occupied by the Germans, the HKP was one of the first work crews they set up. It was located on Ganu Street and was headed by Max Fainsohn, who was well known in the film industry. He immediately made the right contacts with the leading figures of the HKP.

This work crew, which was part of the *Wehrmacht*, consisted of numerous factories and workshops for repairing all the motor vehicles. Mainly professional mechanics were employed there. Nonprofessionals were sent there to be assistant workers, so that over time they could learn the necessary skills.

The major who headed the HDP relied heavily on Max Fainsohn's abilities. He trusted him and called him the Jewish "General". The Jews too now called him the "General".

Later on he was joined by a little man whose rank was *Obergefreiter* (Private First Class), who organized the Jewish workers' deployment schedule.

This man was Walter Eggers from Hamburg. He was a very crafty and clever man, and he realized immediately that the moment had come when a man could amass a fortune with the help of the Jews. He was very poorly endowed in terms of character, and the very first money and valuables he took away from the Jews in return for small favors or advantages granted by him strengthened his intention to concentrate on Jewish affairs as intensely as he could.

According to reports, he didn't trust Fainsohn initially, but was in complete agreement with him later on.

Of course it was easier for wealthy people to be assigned to the HKP. Besides the professional mechanics, who covered for the nonprofessionals in the workshops, women also worked there as cleaners. Others worked as seamstresses in the workshops to supply the clothing depots of the *Wehrmacht*.

A small group of Jews was lodged in the HKP barracks camp in the late fall of 1941; the rest were brought later on from the ghetto to work here. A certain Machmonik was in charge of the rations at this barracks camp. Later he was replaced by Sch. Isaksohn (Izig). Brin, Schnitke from Liepāja, and the pharmacist Zeitlin worked in the kitchen. Sascha Rubinstein, who was the group leader of a department (in the large market halls), became a leading figure.

The Jews did very well in this satellite camp, because here they had connections with the city and thus were able to trade and sell things. Thus one or another of them could sometimes afford to get a bit more for himself. After the liquidation of the Large Ghetto this work crew was enlarged. They were also joined by the German Jews from the Small Ghetto.*

While Roschmann was the ghetto commander, various rumors about "the good life" at the HKP reached his ears. For this reason he had Fainsohn and several women, including Zila Dolgitzer and B. Raikin, Schäffer, Petersohn and others, arrested and taken to the ghetto. They were later freed but then put into prison again. This time too, they were lucky and were once again released. This time Fainsohn was not returned to the HKP but put into the Gestapo work crew (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža). Some of the women were returned to the HKP, while others were taken to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. At the same time Isaak Misroch, who lived at the HKP with his whole family, was also arrested. He was accused of having made contact with Aryans. He was put into prison and died at *Stützpunkt* (see the chapter on

* [Ed.: The German Jews always lived in the larger ghetto, called *German* or *Reichsjuden Ghetto*; there were no German Jews in the small ghetto, only Latvian Jews.]

Rēzekne). Several other cases of "criminal activity" also led to arrests and releases.

As the satellite camp grew, it was moved to a building on Invalīdu Street that was part of the HKP. The guards there were members of the *Wehrmacht*. They led the work crew to its various work stations in the city. In the evening everyone came back to the barracks camp to sleep. The rations were provided by the Small Ghetto, and they were very meager. But all kinds of things could be acquired through the many contacts between the satellite camp and the city.

Kommandant Roschmann carried out several inspections in this satellite camp. These always meant trouble for us. Everything (valuables and money) was buried in the ground or hidden in holes in the houses. For a short time Benjamin Blumberg (who had owned a lumber company) was the *Oberjude*; he was succeeded by Sascha Rubinstein. In the meantime, the "bloodsuckers" Eggers and his assistants could no longer be bought off with small bribes; their acts of extortion became more brazen from day to day. People had to pay for every small favor. Every transfer from the ghetto to the satellite camp had to be paid for in gold. The standard of value was the ten-ruble gold coin from the time of the Czars. In any case, the Jews had to give up their very last possessions in order to save their lives. At that time entire families were living in the HKP, which was a rarity; among them were the Kriwitzki, Rubinstein and Friedmann families.

After the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp was put in charge of all the Jews, the HKP camp was also moved across the Daugava into a building on Ūdens Street. This building had formerly been used as a bathhouse and was now rebuilt. Thus the HKP in Ūdens Street was transformed into a *Kasernierung* or satellite camp. Although the internal control was in the hands of *Wehrmacht* representatives (Schiffmacher, Schiphausen and Eichle), it was the SS that was actually in command.

Two large work stations were now set up nearby (Work Stations Nr. 9 and Nr. 30) for the Jews to work in. At these work stations many people learned the auto mechanic's trade especially well.

Another large work crew went to work at the headquarters on Ganu Street and in other places in the city.

The Jews lived in large rooms that were called blocks.* One of the block leaders was Dr. Goldring. The new arrivals to the HKP came from the liquidated ghetto and from *Kaiserwald* (Robzer, L. Karstadt, the engineer Grin-

* [Ed.; *Blocks* was the name for Barracks.]

blatt, Ch. Schabel and others). The new arrivals from *Kaiserwald* lived under worse conditions than those who had come to the camp before them. They had already been robbed of all their valuables in the concentration camp and had no more possessions to trade, so they had only their meager rations to live on.

A large clinic headed by Professor Mintz was set up. Dr. Gurewitsch also found a broad scope for his professional activity there. Because of various accidents and misfortunes, there was no lack of patients. Other doctors such as Dr. Gitelsohn, Dr. Jaworkowsky, Dr. Blowetz, Dr. May and Dr. Goldberg worked at the large work stations.

The dentist Berniker was in charge of a dental clinic that was amply and well supplied. Dr. Heimann from Warsaw worked together with him.

There were also several older children (Berniker, Sima Kamenkowitsch, Nathan and others) and babies (Feldhuhn and others) at the camp on Üdens Street. Unfortunately, this small group of children was taken to Kaiserwald and from there to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.* Only two of them were lucky: young Arian Berniker, who looked older than his age, and Sima Kamenkowitsch, who managed to get transferred to the Park satellite camp. During the extermination *Aktion* he was living there, and so he survived.

As soon as the murderer Sorge from *Kaiserwald* was put in charge, hard times began at the HKP. His visits were always connected with torments. He made body searches of the prisoners, took away the photos of their relatives, which represented the holiest of holies for everyone, and burned them up. He also ordered the prayer books and other religious implements to be destroyed.

At that time one of the block representatives was a certain Raikin, who was later sent to Spilve, and from there via *Kaiserwald* to the *Stützpunkt*. All of these depressing cares made it necessary to look for a way out, so it was decided – with Eggers' permission, of course – to set up a new camp in the city, located at the HKP headquarters. This new camp was called the Park (see the chapter on the Park satellite camp).

After Rubinstein and Legow were arrested and sent to *Kaiserwald*, the truly decent German Jew Wolf from Danzig succeeded them as the camp elder.

Even under these difficult conditions, the Jews prayed every Saturday and on every religious holiday. At Passover a Seder was organized, including matzos which were baked for everyone at night. Moreover, to help people cope with these difficult times and give their broken hearts some support, the artists in the camp (Sperling-Tschuzhoj, Joffe, Kotzer and others) did all they could.

* [Ed.: They were taken to the forest.]

Even the young people from Vilno and the women tried to make our life more beautiful with their melancholy ghetto songs. Even small children sometimes stepped onto the "stage".

During that period our comrade Berel played a leading role as the head of a work station. Later on, when he was sent by the murderer Blatterspiegel to *Stützpunkt* via *Kaiserwald*, everyone mourned for him deeply and continued for a long time to speak of him and his decent and comradely behavior. Regrettably, he died in the base camp.

The elite of our ghetto and the Reich Jewish ghetto, together with their wives, were also lodged at the HKP (Kassel, Frankenberg, Perl, Neuburger and others).

The camp elder Wolf did not stay in his position for long. After the SS men Sorge and Greschel* were replaced by the SS man Blatterspiegel, he was replaced. Blatterspiegel even slapped him and ordered his transfer to Spilve. The now-vacant position was given to the German Jew Metzger.

Of course this difficult period at the HKP made the Jews fear greatly for their lives. They saw that everyone was being killed, one person sooner and another later. So people were forced to think about what they could do to save their own lives. The only way was to escape – which was not completely safe either. But this alternative was available only to the Latvian Jews, for they still had connections in the city from former times.

The "season" was opened by Dawidow (owner of the Hollstein Company). He managed to escape, but I don't know whether he survived later on, because after the liberation he was no longer seen. Next in line were Drisin (who had owned a lumber company) and Dagarow-Epstein (a cinema entrepreneur). Other escapees were Wolf Sr. (a jeweler), Magilnikow (an engineer), Dr. Goldberg and Dreier (from Latgale). Dreier attempted to escape on the same day as Goldberg. He was unlucky, and was captured and shot on the spot.

Because of these escapes, many people were designated to serve as hostages (the engineers Kagan and Friedmann, Kleinstadt, Treinin, Minin and many others). They were taken to *Kaiserwald* and many of them were transferred from there to *Stützpunkt*.

After an act of sabotage in one of the work stations, hostages were once again sent *Stützpunkt* via *Kaiserwald*. A small work crew from the OT gas station was also lodged in the HKP satellite camp. One day half of the twelve-man work crew was taken away to *Stützpunkt*, including Faiwusch Schiff. Of

* [Ed.: His name was supposed to be Kroeschel.]

course all of them were very hideously killed. The son of the leather magnate Wolfsohn was killed because an Aryan woman had given him a food package.

Here as everywhere else, the men and women had their hair cut short. Besides the large-scale children's action, there was also another one for the old and weak people. It was carried out by the SS man Dr. Krebsbach (who was recently hanged after being sentenced in the Mauthausen trial).

On 4 August 1944 the SS surrounded the HKP building on Ūdens Street. All the inmates were taken away to Strasdenhof without any baggage. There they met some of their fellow workers from the HKP Park camp. They were put into prisoners' uniforms. Then Eggers, with the help of O. Steuer, who was then the inmates' elder at the HKP Park camp, selected one hundred people (men and women) to be sent to *Kaiserwald*.

The rest were sent, together with a small number of people from Strasdenhof and other *Kaiserwald* satellite camp inmates, to Germany by ship on 6 August 1944.

The only inmate of the HKP on Ūdens Street who did not share this fate was Dr. Gurewitsch from Daugavpils — but only because he had committed suicide.

c) Park (H.K.P.)

The Park satellite camp was a branch of the large HKP camp. At the end of January 1944 it was set up in the center of the city on Ganu Street.

"Iron Gustav",* an SS man who tormented the Jews in the HKP with particular cruelty, forced them to seek a way out of this suffering. So they created a new camp in the city with the help of the German Private First Class Eggers, who was responsible for Jewish affairs. Eggers, who was himself a blood-sucker, immediately used the opportunity to enrich himself, for every assignment to the new Park work crew cost a fee that had to be paid in gold. Only a few specialists who had to cover for the nonprofessionals got in without having to pay for it. Even Jews took advantage of the opportunity to earn something by getting people into this satellite camps.

Word of these circumstances reached the ears of "Iron Gustav", and he ordered the arrest of Sascha Rubinstein and Legow. They were transported to Kaiserwald during the time I was there.

* [Ed.: Sorge]

In the meantime the camp representative of *Kaiserwald* had decided to send me to be the representative of the Park camp. Initially I refused, for I knew how much my help was needed in the concentration camp (see the chapter on *Kaiserwald*, section XVII). But after the camp representative explained to me that if I didn't go they would send another man in my stead who would be very bad for the Jews at the Park barracks camp, I finally accepted the position.

The work crew there consisted of more than 200 people, men and women. Some of them lived in the HKP and came from there every day to work in the Park camp. Others were lodged in a barrack on Ganu Street. I would also like to mention that at this time the Park camp was the only satellite camp in the city itself. The living conditions were very good in comparison to those in the other camps. We even had a washroom with hot and cold running water, and later on an extra dining room.

Workshops had been set up. At that time Potasch, Pristin, Joffe, Zemel, Meller and others worked in the men's tailoring shop. In the women's tailoring shop Mrs. Rubinstein, Mrs. Friedmann and her daughter Madi, Mrs. Kamenkowitz, Mrs. Minsker and her daughter, and Mrs. Kirschbaum-Rudow worked as seamstresses. Borkum, Rosenthal, Ritow and the professional painter Kahn worked in the painting workshop. The workshops for plumbing, radio repair and carpentry employed the Maurer brothers, Mulja Burstein, Slotnikow, Golombeck, Urewitsch, Juli Kreitzer and others. Among the cleaners were Mrs. Sima Dreier, Mrs. Burstein and Mrs. Dolgitzer. Interior work was done by Mrs. Lilia Misroch, Schmechmann, Legow, Machmonik and Max Salmanowitsch.

Laser, Bahn, Paul Lewi, Reisele Lubotzka and others were in a special commando that worked at the NSDAP. A group headed by the specialist Perl worked in a large factory hall; here one saw Sascha Woloschinski, Ritow, Dr. Blowetz, Lewensohn and Raft. Max Michelsohn, Sioma Gurwitsch and some others worked in the drivers' pool. A great many women worked in the huge laundry, which was headed by Rosa Kramer; they included Miss Misroch (the daughter), Zila Dolgitzer, Jetta Feldhuhn and Betty Segal. In the shoemakers' workshop, which was headed by Kagan, shoes were patched, repaired and re-soled by Dubowitzki and various others. The Amburg brothers, Auguston, B. Blumberg, Paul Wange, I. Schalit and others worked in what was called the construction site work crew and in the carpentry and transport crews.

Through their transport opportunities, our comrades Blumberg and Wange sometimes improved our situation by providing our work crew with food.

There was even a soap-making crew (in which the engineer Wulfowitz worked) and a photo studio.

Dr. B. Rudow provided medical services.

The necessary work in a warehouse for replacement parts was done by the Meller brothers, Leo Birkhahn and others. The engineer Rappoport worked as a draftsman.

Also living in the Park barracks camp was the entire Kriwitzki family (husband, wife and two daughters) and Schapiro with his daughter.

In general, the work was not hard. The Jews got an extraordinary amount of work done and the Germans were very satisfied. Most satisfied of all was Eggers, for he received money for every small favor. He was assisted in this by Rubinstein, who had returned from *Kaiserwald*, and later on by the Czech Jew Steuer.

When I arrived at the Park camp I was struck by the fact that here, in contrast to all the other satellite camps and the former ghetto, there were many people who had enough to eat and many who were going hungry. (The latter group mostly consisted of German Jews.) With Schmehmann's help this difference was soon eliminated. We set up a kitchen for everyone and later on we even sacrificed a large part of the food we received regularly as our rations, for the benefit of the HKP and Balasta Dam barracks camps.

During the first days after my arrival I made a speech to the Park work crew to the effect that this unjust situation was intolerable. I also explained that I had come there only because I was forced to do so, because the situation had required it, and that after losing my entire family my only concern there was for my coreligionists, as it had been in *Kaiserwald*. I ended with the words: "The greatest reward for me will be if one day I can open the gates of freedom for you." So later on my comrades often asked me: "When will you open the gates for us at last?"

The Park's administrators - high-ranking officers - summoned me to tell me that I was responsible for all the Jews who were working there, and that I would lose my head if anything went wrong. At that time I gave them a very brief and cold-blooded answer: that I was a person who Tschuzhoj knew what responsibility meant, and that I would assume total responsibility for my coreligionists.

Life went on fairly normally. Every day we went to work at six in the morning and came back at the same hour in the evening. Then we gathered together, engaged in a great variety of pastimes, and sometimes held religious services, for which comrade Pill made the preparations. On Sundays we al-

ways had visitors from the HKP camp. We arranged small entertainments (with* others), or some of us would go to visit their friends in the HKP.

Of course there were incidents now and again in the barracks camp, but these were taken care of by Eggers in exchange for good payoffs. On account of gold coins that were found in his possession, one of our comrades, the engineer Goldarbeiter, was arrested and taken to *Kaiserwald*, where he found his death.

I would like to note at this point that *Kaiserwald* constantly required people for *Stützpunkt*. In one case, no fewer than fifty people were sent from the Park and the HKP camps. With the help of the camp elder of *Kaiserwald*, this *gezeire* (affliction) was ended, and many who are now living as a result have this man to thank for it.** Comrade Abraham Laser also helped us a great deal in this respect, for he sent to *Kaiserwald* free of charge, as a reward, many bottles of alcoholic drinks from the unit in which he worked.

For the second evening of Passover I decided to organize a Seder for my comrades. The Seder was very, very modest, but we had gotten a bit of matzo and eggs from the HKP. Mrs. L. Misroch took on the role of hostess.

"*Ho lachmo anijo*" (the bread of the poor). Never in my life had I had such a Seder; the bread really did look poor.

"*Hoschato awdo, Ischono hazojs bnei chojrin!*" (Now we are slaves, but this year we will be free men.) "*Ma nishtana?*" ("Why is this night different..."), first of the four questions asked during the Seder ceremony) was asked, but the "Haggadah" was not read.

On this occasion I once again made a short speech, in which I compared the period the Jews spent in Egypt to our own. "*Mawdus lchejrus*" (from slavery to freedom) was the basic theme and main subject of my speech. All the comrades had tears in their eyes, and I myself had to weep.

The summer brought dramatic events: the front was constantly moving closer. The Soviet Army was not pushing directly toward Riga but further back toward Vilno and Kovno, so that the only direction in which we could retreat was the sea. Many comrades who had assessed the situation clearly were already preparing hiding places for themselves in the city. I too had found a hiding place for myself, but because I knew that others would inevita-

* [Ed.: Tschuzhoj and others, or (p. 386 in Kaufmann's book)]

** [Ed. There was a large clean-up *Kommando* in the ghetto at that time, and men from there were taken to the forest from time to time, to do the grisly work. That alone was the reason why *Kaiserwald*'s men were "safe" from *Stützpunkt*.]

bly have to pay for my flight with their lives, I decided to stay on until the end.

During this period a small *Aktion* to exterminate the children was carried out in the HKP and the other satellite camps. This is why I had taken young Kamenkowitsch out of there, said he was older, and integrated him into the Park work camp. I still regret that it was impossible for me to save more children at that time.

In order to find Jews who were hidden, many house searches were made in the city during that period. Seven people were arrested at the home of a Mrs. Pole at 15 Peldu Street. They defended themselves with automatic machine guns and killed three of the Latvians who had forced their way into the apartment. The Jews themselves had four casualties, including Josef Grundmann, Lipmanowitsch and Sergej Gurewitsch. The other three, including Dr. Herzfeld's son, escaped.

In May 1944 Sauer visited our camp. When I heard about the visit it was clear to me that nothing good was in store for us. I immediately made sure that all the divisions would stay in their places so that they would be working when Sauer inspected them. He made his first visit to the laundry. There he saw two women who were not occupied at that moment, and he immediately slapped them. He then went directly to the construction section of the mechanics' workshop. The head of this section was the Nuremberg Jew Salaman, a strict German captain who wore an Iron Cross. On his inspection tour Sauer discovered that various types of food, including strawberries, had been concealed in the large kettles that were standing there. He was so angry that he slapped Salaman resoundingly, just as he had done to the two women. After that he had his helpers fetch our comrades Duchownik and, later on, Rosenthal. He also ordered the entire work crew of the construction section to assemble, including Magarik, Lewin, Juli Ariewitsch and Chatzkel Abram. All of them were arrested and transported to *Kaiserwald*. He also took the German Jew Schneider, who was the former helper of the ghetto policeman Wand. Only Jascha Landmann, who "fortunately" had broken his foot, escaped this destruction. He survived. We found out later that the real reason for Sauer's visit was that he wanted to have Salaman, Duchownik and Rosenthal transported because they were still in contact with their Aryan wives in the city. Because he accidentally found the hidden food in the course of his inspection, he had the entire work crew arrested.

The "great man" also inspected my bed; although he found nothing, I definitely did not feel my life was safe.

In *Kaiserwald* Salaman, Duchownik and Rosenthal were first severely tortured and then transported to "points unknown". The other people from the construction section had a black point sewn onto the backs of their prisoners' uniforms, which meant they were next in line for transport to *Stützpunkt*. Lewin and Magarik were exempted from this transport because they paid the labor deployment team well. All the others had to go to prison, and from there to *Stützpunkt*.

Like everywhere else, our women and men had their hair cut, and the men had the usual stripe shaved down the middle of their heads. The shoemaker Kagan, who was bald, had a stripe painted down the middle of his head with paint.

Blatterspiegel, who was at that time an SS *Scharführer*, was determined to get S. Rubinstein from the Park work crew and put him in prison, so he ordered him to be transported to Lenta. Later on, Rubinstein returned to the Park work crew, was arrested there, and was thrown into prison, where he died.

Three people disappeared from the camp one afternoon in July 1944; they included Willy Nogaller and Miss Lilly Kreitzer. They escaped through the potato cellar.

During one action that was carried out in our camp to exterminate older people, an SS man came to check us against his list. One after another we had to march past him. As we did so he selected five women, including Mrs. Barenblatt and Mrs. Minsker. When he came back the next day to fetch them, I told him they had already been transported to *Kaiserwald*, which of course was not true. In any case, that time their lives were saved. When *Kaiserwald* called up Eggers to ask for the women again, he gave them the same information – that they had been sent off and ought to be there already – and so the whole attempt came to nothing.

In the meantime Jelgava, which is about 50 kilometers from Riga, was occupied by the Russians. There was a great panic in all the administrative offices. They began to evacuate us. Willingly and even eagerly, we packed our things. This was probably the only piece of work that we did with real pleasure.

On the evening of 29 July 1944 our comrades Dr. Rudow, Isia Pristin and Mrs. Rudow escaped very suddenly from our barracks camp. We found out later that they had taken off their marked clothing in a cellar room and had fled to a nearby courtyard using a second key. From there they reached Dzirnavu Street. The reason for their hasty flight was that the "Aryan" Rudow had told them that an *Action* was planned for that night and that they absolutely had to flee. Rudow himself also disappeared from Lenta.

This event threw us into a great panic, and each person thought only of how to save himself. On the same evening, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the clothing depot (Kapisius) summoned some of our comrades to the second courtyard, which was opposite the Park camp. He said he wanted to speak to them about the escapees.

Sascha Woloschinski, Paul Wange and Leo Arenstamm went to the meeting point. Later they were accused of having planned to escape, and were locked into separate cells. Wange, who was very strong and had been put into the cell next to the attic, managed, by his own account, to remove the iron bars of the cell and escape over the roofs. And he did indeed survive.

That whole night was very agitated in the camp. Some people, like Ritow and Gruschko, fled through the fence before my very eyes. During an air bombardment which took place that night, the second Ritow (a painter) disappeared too, and the next morning Lewin (a leather manufacturer) was missing. But he was unlucky, for he was caught on the street; Gruschko had the same fate.

Later the whole work crew was assembled and most of them were transported to *Kaiserwald*. I used this opportunity to voluntarily hand over the leadership of the work crew to the Czech Jew Steuer. After that I worked as a transport laborer among those who still remained in the Park camp. From that point on we were lodged in the Čiekurkalns suburb and had to wear prisoners' uniforms.

Some of those who had been taken to *Kaiserwald* by Eggers were sent away and died in an *Aktion* that was carried out there at that time.* Among the victims was my best friend, Sascha Woloschinski, and my comrades Ljowa Neuburger, Gruschko, Machmonik, Leo Meller, Lewin and others.

I worked in the Park a while longer until our elder, Steuer, escaped. He managed to flee in the following way: Aryan women in whose homes Neuburger and Janowski wanted to hide came to the camp to talk about this matter, and he persuaded them to save him instead of the other two men. Five hostages were selected in reprisal for his escape: Jakob Abramsohn, Legow, Gut, Dubowitzki and I. We were fetched by SS men and taken to *Kaiserwald* in a truck, in which we were forced to lie on our stomachs. We were in absolute despair. Our further fate is already known to the reader from the chapter on *Kaiserwald* (section XXII).

* [Ed.: These men were added to those Jews selected on July 27th and taken to the forest several days later.]

Nor did the others remain in the Park camp for long. Some people from *Kaiserwald* (Misroch, his daughter and others) joined them, but fairly soon all of them were taken away by ship to Stutthof.

d) Quartieramt (Billeting Department)

The largest *Kommando* in the ghetto period was the Billeting Department. It was a *Wehrmacht* unit that dealt with the billeting of the military forces and was led by Captain Zorn. Hotels and numerous Jewish apartments with their furniture intact were available for this purpose. Jews worked in all sections of this *Kommando*; a small fraction of them lived in a satellite camp there.

At the headquarters of the Billeting Department on Vaļņu Street there were workshops in which shoemakers, tailors (Baschkin and others), electricians, mechanics, watchmakers and others worked. Many Jews worked in the furniture transport unit, and the women Mrs. Kimcho, Mrs. Oretschkina and others worked as cleaners.

From July 1941 until the liquidation of the satellite camp on 21 November 1943 the overseer of this work crew was Private First Class Schmidt. A sadist by nature, he terrorized the Jews in the worst way imaginable, and his only concern was to squeeze money out of them. He dealt out beatings very "generously".

But our real overseer was Sergeant Bendel. He too was very greedy for our money. Once he had received his payment he immediately forgot what it had been for, so that one had to give him money again and again. Nonetheless, the Jews tried very hard to get assigned to this work crew. The work was not too hard, and besides in the city center they could make contact with the outside world.

Besides the Latvian Jews, many German Jews, men and women, also worked in this satellite camp. After the liquidation of the ghetto, many Jews tried to escape from here. One of the first was Lipmanowitsch; in reprisal, his brother was taken to the ghetto and shot. Several people escaped from other sections as well, for instance three people from 9 Ģertūdas Street and various Jews from Eksporta Street (the musician Ostrowski and Fomin). In the large satellite camp at 93 Brīvības Street a clinic had been set up in the large Witte building, and Jews had to work there as well (G. Raizin, Feldmann, Gustav Joffe, Kotzer, Mrs. Peres née Blumstein from Königsberg and others). Mrs. Peres, however, was soon arrested, put into prison, and shot there.

People said that one day Private First Class Schmidt went to the ghetto *Kommandant* Krause to ask him to release from prison a number of people whose names were on a list of various specialists he said he needed. Presumably Schmidt had been paid well by these people's relatives. At first Krause postponed the whole matter, but eventually he ordered Schmidt to go to the prison to fetch these people. He made him wait there, and in the meantime shot all the people whose names were on the list. After that he called Schmidt, pointed to the corpses, and said: "Now you can take your 'specialists' away with you."

During the period when I too was housed there, the following people worked in the various sections of this work crew: Waldenberg, Patzkin, Peretz, Brandt, Raikin, Kapulski, Löw, Schelkan, Berner, Michlin, the Rabinowitsch brothers and others. The shoemaker Fischelsohn also worked together with us. He was an especially hard-working and decent person, and he saved up a great deal of money in order to rescue his two children, who were in prison on account of the weapons incident. Through the mediation of the German Jew Kohn, he personally handed over to *Kommandant* Roschmann a large number of gold coins. Roschmann took them with thanks and promised that everything would be put in order, but nothing happened. Roschmann was given further payments via Kohn, but nothing was ever done. Later, when Kohn himself fled from *Kaiserwald*, he received his "reward" from the Russians, who shot him.

On the evening of 20 November 1943 after the *Hawdole* (Saturday evening prayer), Patzkin and Raikin disappeared. Consequently we were badly terrorized all night by Schmidt and Bendel, and the next day all the Jews in the Billeting Department satellite camp were assembled, thoroughly searched by the aforementioned "gentlemen", beaten, and transported to the ghetto, which had been nearly liquidated by then.*

e) Spilve

This name was known to us natives of Riga as the site of the largest airport on that side of the Daugava. Now the airport's administrators ordered the delivery of about 350 Jews from Kovno in Lithuania to work there. Those Kovno natives who had relatives in the Riga ghetto immediately volunteered for this transport; others had to be forced to join it. The transport, which arrived in Riga on 25 October 1942, included men, women and a small number of children. The Kovno Jews had with them not only their large pieces of luggage but

* [Ed.: There were very few people left in the ghetto. It had been liquidated on November 2, 1943.]

also sewing machines and things of that sort. Their elder was the German Jew Kohn from Munich. Some very well-known Jewish public figures from Kovno were also in the group.

All of these people were lodged in the large building of the Iļģuciems brewery near Spilve. Initially the German *Wehrmacht* supervised and fed them; the person in charge of all organizational matters and supplies was the noncommissioned officer Löffler and Private First Class Schuhmacher. With their help it was possible for people from Spilve to visit their relatives in the ghetto and vice versa. Because these visits enabled people to give one another support, everyone's life became somewhat easier.

The Jewish police officers at Spilve were the master painter Zapp and his wife, who were from Kovno. Mrs. Zapp did not treat the women well, as I myself witnessed. For this reason, later on everyone uttered her name only with contempt.

Medical assistance was provided by Dr. Klebanow from Kovno. He was a gynecologist and had a truly great Jewish heart; he showed understanding for every individual, and so he was loved by everyone. Because even the German military men valued him, he was able to lighten the Jews' burden. It was Dr. Klebanow who set up a dental clinic, in which a woman dentist from Kovno worked.

The work done at this barracks camp consisted of serving the needs of the airport, large and small. Summer and winter, the Jews in the camp had to do heavy labor. Craftsmen such as shoemakers and tailors worked there at their trades.

The whole situation at Spilve changed when *Kaiserwald* took over the control of this barracks camp. At that point Spilve became a small *Kasernierung*. Many people were delivered to Spilve in the summer of 1943 from the ghetto before its liquidation and later from the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. There were thousands of them, and the living conditions became more and more unbearable. The SS guards and the rations were now also provided by *Kaiserwald*. The result was that people died like flies. Although Dr. Klebanow was given the Riga physician Dr. Solomir as an assistant, this was not enough. People were sent back to *Kaiserwald* starving and half-dead. I will never forget something I saw at the end of winter 1943: people were being taken from Spilve to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp on a sledge, piled up like a stack of wood, and many of them had died on the way.

In January 1944 the camp elder Kohn and his wife came to *Kaiserwald*, and his post was briefly taken over by the Aryan prisoner Mr. X, who was notori-

ous in *Kaiserwald*. He was assisted by Raikin, whom the Jews tried to get rid of as soon as possible. Mr. X was succeeded by the SS murderers Sorge and Greschel,* who are already known to the reader, then by a Swiss prisoner, and after that by the SS man Blatterspiegel. These conditions forced many people to flee. The first ones to make the attempt were Boris Schmuljan, Gruschko (both of them were found and shot), Jeletzki, the engineer Kodesch, Monastirski and others. Schneidermann, well-known because of the Trud tobacco factory, threw himself under a train. "Iron Gustav" ordered that the corpse, whose head had been separated from the body, should be "punished" by being locked in a bunker for three days. Blatterspiegel ordered the hanging of a Czech Jew. These are only a few cases, but they are probably sufficient to illustrate the conditions at Spilve.

In April 1944 a large work crew of men and women was transported to Ponewesch and Siauliai in Lithuania. They had to work at the airport there and lived in wooden huts. When the front moved closer, they were taken via Stuttgart to Dachau. The physician Dr. Solomir was among those who died in Dachau.

A small group of Lithuanian Jews was sent from Spilve to Daudzeva-Viesīte in Latvia to do logging. They worked there for seven months, and the following people risked an escape attempt: the Safir brothers, Miller and Winokur (all of them were from Kovno). After the Russians had advanced to this point as well, the work crew was moved to Liepāja, where fourteen more people escaped. In Liepāja the work crew had to work for the navy. Later it was combined with the small remainder of the Army Clothing Department (ABA) camp in Riga, transferred to the prison in Hamburg, and taken from there in groups to Bergen-Belsen. Among those who survived was my comrade Hermann.

Of course extermination *Aktionen* were carried out in Spilve, as they were everywhere else, beginning with the children and ending with the old people. The usual haircut, which I have already described, was given to the inmates here too. The hair was collected and sent to Germany to be processed.

On 6 August 1944 the remainder of the Spilve barracks camp was sent by ship to Germany. Only a small group remained to do the clearing up. But because they had sung Soviet songs they were punished by being sent to *Kaiserwald*. From there the "guilty ones" were sent to *Stützpunkt* to work in the notorious "potato *Kommando*" (see the chapter on Jumpravmuiža), where their lives ended.

* [Ed.: Kroeschel]

Bloodsoaked Spilve, which had requisitioned thousands of people, also claimed thousands of victims.

After I had finished writing this chapter I learned that "Iron Gustav" (the commander of Spilve) had been sentenced to twenty-five years of hard labor by a Russian military court in the Sachsenhausen trial in the Russian zone of Germany (the death penalty had been abolished under Russian law).

Among the many statements made by "Iron Gustav", the one that is perhaps especially worth repeating is: "All the SS men were beasts, but I was the worst one!"

f) A.B.A.

(Armeebekleidungsamt – Army Clothing Department)

About 2,000 Jews worked in this large satellite camp, which was located in the Riga suburb of Mīlgrāvis. The main work was the transportation and sorting of clothing. Teenagers and children had to help do this work; their job was to push the clothing carts back and forth.

It was exclusively a *Wehrmacht* unit. The camp representative was the German Jew Schultz, whom the reader already knows from the chapter on the ghetto, where he headed the Labor Authority. The Latvian Jews were not very satisfied with him; moreover, they still resented him for the way he had treated them in the ghetto. The supervisors of the *Wehrmacht* work crew were the non-commissioned officer Müller and Privates First Class Sass and Schwellenbach. They made life extremely difficult for the Jews. The Riga Jews in this work crew were the engineers Antikol and Saslawski, Dr. Tumarkin, Dr. Joseph (from Berlin) and others.

Several extermination *Aktionen* were carried out here, as they were everywhere; here they were implemented by the SS men Krebsbach and Wisner. The children's *Aktion* cost nineteen children their lives. In the last and largest *Aktion*, everyone had to take off his clothes and be inspected by the aforementioned SS men. Those whom they didn't like or who had a physical handicap, men and women, were ordered to step to the side. As they gave these orders, the murderers added, laughing: "For a holiday!" Those killed in this *Aktion* included the entire Pukin family, the lawyer Finkelstein, Herman Rosin, the engineer Lubotzki and others. At that time, the three Galanter brothers were also taken to the bunker. They had been caught as they tried to escape, but they were lucky and survived.

On 6 August 1944 most of the people in this camp were taken to Stutthof. They continued to work in the same unit in the concentration camp. The others

were also transported to Stutthof later on. Some of them were then taken to the prison in Hamburg and from there to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Of this large barracks camp, only a very few (Schultz, among others) survived.

g) AEG

(Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft – General Electricity Company)

In October 1943 a group of women was sent from *Kaiserwald* to the AEG works to be tried out as workers there. After the management had seen that the Jewish workers were usable, this work crew was gradually enlarged and it was decided to set up a camp for them. The women were housed in a building on Vidzemes Avenue across from the factory, next to a large camp for Russian prisoners of war. The factory's managers constantly requested more and more workers, so that finally about 1,000 women were working there.

They worked in the division for electric bulbs and wiring. They were guarded by armed Latvians, and *SS-Mädels* (SS girls) commanded them as representatives of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. Initially the SS girl Emma was their supervisor. She was a calm person who paid little attention to the barracks camp as a whole. The situation worsened after Emma was replaced by the SS girl Marija (a Latvian woman), for Marija beat the women and tormented them whenever she could. But the SS girl Kowa, who was sent from *Kaiserwald* to be in charge for a short time, was the one who indulged her sadistic instincts the most.

The living conditions in the barracks camp were miserable and the rations were extremely meager. The many women from Germany and from Vilno who were in this work crew lived in especially difficult circumstances; the Riga women, who had contact with the city through the men and women factory workers, could at least alleviate their own situation somewhat by trading their possessions that were still in the city for food.

A great many young girls who had been separated from their parents also worked in this barracks camp. The leader of this work crew was the Austrian Jewish woman Mrs. Naftali. She was clever and knew how to deal with the management and the SS girls in a way that benefited the barracks camp. The block elder Hilda from Liepāja was less popular with the inmates.

There was no clinic. Only a woman doctor from Vilno was available for any cases of illness.

The drives to *Kaiserwald* to fetch rations or visit the clinic or the dental clinic were the women's only connection with the outside world. On these occasions people brought back letters and other forbidden items from *Kaiserwald*. Very often, strict inspections were carried out before they left *Kaiserwald*, and only too often the SS man Hirsch (who was from Bavaria) beat the women mercilessly (among them were L. Burian, O. Rogalin and others).

Because of their difficult situation, some women tried to escape from the AEG barracks camp, as people were doing everywhere. But they were caught, taken back to *Kaiserwald* and punished there. A certain Sophie Berger, who had handed a letter to an Aryan, was fetched by *Kommandant* Roschmann in person and transported to prison. But she was lucky and was not killed at that time.

The order to crop the inmates' hair was a great tragedy for all the women. *Kommandant* Sauer himself went to the AEG satellite camp to make sure this barbarous order was implemented precisely. After that, the unfortunate women could be seen marching to and from the factory wearing their striped zebra dresses and white headscarves. When they were on the street, the rest of the traffic was barred from Vidzemes Avenue. In this way the commanders tried to keep people from seeing the women or giving them anything.

Nobody who was not there himself can describe the misery of this *Kasernierung*. It was also called the "women's cloister".

In August 1944, when the AEG factory was evacuated to Thorn, 500 of these women were also transported there.* They reached their destination after a long journey under inhuman conditions in cattle cars. Those who remained in Riga were taken to Stutthof by ship on 25 September 1944 (see the chapter "The Evacuation"). During this evacuation the half-Aryan Mrs. Olga Klaus (Mrs. Ginsburg) succeeded in escaping. The women who had been transported to Thorn had to work in bunkers under very difficult conditions and were supervised by the SS man Blatterspiegel.

In early 1945, as the Russians were approaching Thorn, the work crew was taken away from there to an unspecified destination. But as they were on their way, the hour of liberation struck for these women, through the Russians. Blatterspiegel and his guards managed to disappear before this happened. A great many of the liberated women survived: Mrs. B. Kaufmann and her daughter, Mrs. Gurwitz and Mrs. Salzberg from Kovno, L. Burian and Mrs. Ameisen from Prague, Mrs. Rogalin and her daughter Olga, Fira and Rosa

* [Ed.: They are listed in Stutthof, but went directly to Thorn.]

Paperna, Fania Gurwitsch and her mother, Rita Blond, Frida Schwarz, Mrs. Ulmann with her two daughters, Judith Jakobsohn, Mali and Sonia Jakobsohn, Anna Michelsohn, Riwa Stein, Herta and Ruth Berg, Rosa Estermann, Arenstamm, Eta Bojarska, Mia Schwab, Mali Ellinsohn, Betti Leibowitsch, Fania Hirschfeld, Ljuba Tewelow, the tennis player Rosa Schulmann, Herta, Dora, Ella, and Inna Berger and others.

However, nearly all the women who were sent back to Stutthof or remained in Riga died of starvation and typhoid fever.

h) Strasdenhof (Strazdumuiža)

*Mir seinen Strasdenhofer idn **
A naje Europa boien mir
Die arbet is bai uns farschidn,
Nur cores iz do gor on a schir.

(We're the Jews of Strasdenhof
We're building a new Europe
We're doing all kinds of work
But troubles and miseries abound.)

(The "Strasdenhof Hymn", composed by Etele Zinn from Liepāja)

Before the liquidation of the ghetto in October** 1943, a new satellite camp named Strazdumuiža was set up. It was lodged in a large factory building that stood next to the new bridge on Vidzemes Avenue on the banks of the Jugla River. All the workshops this work crew had had in the German and the Latvian ghettos were moved by the Area Commissary to the new camp. A great number of children, women and older men worked in Strazdumuiža. Later a large number of women from Vilno were brought from Kaiserwald to join them. Many Jews also worked in such nearby factories as Rīgas Audums (a textile mill), Juglas Manufaktūra and several leather factories. The teenagers in the work crew had to work in the division for electrical wires and telephones.

The living conditions and the rations in the Strazdumuiža camp were extraordinarily bad, and the mortality rate was very high. The German Jew Baum from Cologne was appointed to head the labor deployment team. He was well known to the German Jews from their days in the ghetto, and he demon-

* [Ed.: Idn]

** [Ed.: November]

strated his power as much as possible. But his "reign" did not last long, for he was liquidated together with his two sons at the first opportunity. I happened to be in Kaiserwald to pick up rations just as he arrived there. When the German Jews in Kaiserwald heard he was coming, they prepared quite a "reception" for him. In particular, he was taught how to work, and during the one or two days he was in the concentration camp the "poor man" was forced to suffer in abundance everything he had missed in the ghetto; he was beaten as well.*

The guards consisted mostly of Germans from Siebenbürgen (Transylvania in Romania). They were headed by the SS men Hoffmann and Dering. They punished even the smallest infraction with the greatest cruelty. For example, Mrs. Irka Jerusalimska from Vilno was horribly beaten with a truncheon. Others who lost consciousness during these beatings were doused with water and then tormented further. On Sundays, when they did not go to work, everyone had to clean the latrines.

Of course, because of this treatment everyone looked for contacts that could help them escape. The first ones to do so were the Keile sisters, Rachel Brudner and Miss Raja. After them came Ljolja Gitelsohn and Ljuba Drujan (all of them were from Vilno). Some of the Latvian Jews also escaped: Behrmann, the engineer Seidemann and his brother, and Sallgaller. The latter, however, was unlucky. Later the leader of the work crew, Morein, also escaped.

The German prisoner Hans Bruns was the camp elder. This political criminal, who had already spent a long time in concentration camps, made life difficult for everyone. For a short time Reinhold Rosenmayer was the camp elder; later on it was the engineer Rago.

Of course Strazdumuiža was not immune from extermination actions; these were carried out on 28 July and 3 August 1944. The last action was implemented with especial cruelty, so that two-thirds of the entire work crew were killed. No action of this kind – in which the teenagers up to the age of eighteen and the men and women older than thirty were killed without exception – had ever been carried out before. Some of the people who had hidden in an attempt to save themselves were found and shot (Leib Machelsohn, Buchbinder, Hamburger from Vienna and others). Among the participants of this persecution were the extremely sadistic SS man Hoffmann and "Uscha" Dering.**

* [Ed.: Baum was well liked, and so were his sons. He was taken ill and was therefore sent to Kaiserwald's sick bay. His boys, 18 and 20 at the time, volunteered to go with him. The German Jews at the camp were glad to see him. Mr. Baum was killed by injection at the sick bay. The boys ended up at *Stützpunkt*.]

** [Ed.: Uscha stands for Unterscharführer.]

But some people did manage to save themselves. For example, Rabbi Spitz hid in the factory's large chimney, and the camp elder, engineer Rago, was taken out of the camp in the garbage truck, completely covered with garbage. Both of them survived.

From later reports we learned that some members of the work crew were taken to the delousing station of the former ghetto on Ludzas Street and gassed there.* The rest were taken to the Biķernieki forest and shot. After these murders a group of women was sent to the delousing station to sort the dead people's clothes. They recognized many items of clothing that had belonged to their relatives who had been in Strazdumuiža.

Thus only about 700 people aged between eighteen and thirty remained from the large satellite camp that had once numbered several thousand. All of them were put into prisoners' uniforms and transported by ship to Stutthof on 6 August 1944, together with the Jews who had arrived in the meantime from the HKP camp. The survivors of this transport include the following women from Vilno: Lisa and Sarah Pruchno, Mascha Tschernuska, Dusia Atlas, Frieda Zewin, Rachil and Sarah Delatitzka, Schulkin, Mania Lewin, Rita and Rachel Lekachowisch and others.

A very small number of Jews who had been kept in Strazdumuiža for cleanup work – these included the Gottlieb brothers, their sister, and Edelstein, all of them from Liepāja – were taken a short time later to the Kaiserwald concentration camp and there put onto the next transport ship to Germany.

i) Reichskommissariat (Reich Commissary)

In the center of the city, on Vaļņu Street, there was a small satellite camp consisting of about 350 men, women and children. It was called the Reich Commissary.

It consisted of tailoring workshops that belonged to the Reich Commissary. Good specialized workers and also people they had trained (such as Mrs. Pikielni from Lodz) worked there. The head of this barracks camp was Leibsohn (a familiar figure because of the Jockey Club Company).

The inmates came to the ghetto very seldom and lived in their camp as if they were in a small prison. This was also the last camp in the city to be liquidated and sent to Kaiserwald. From there the inmates were sent to the large TWL satellite camp.

* [Ed.: Uscha stands for Unterscharführer.]

Leibsohn, however, was arrested and put in prison. Others said that because he was in the fashion business the SA had sent him to Hungary. No details are known about his fate; in any case, he has not shown up among the survivors so far.

j) Reichsbahn (Reich Railroad)

This satellite camp was so named because its inmates worked on the Railroad of the German Reich. There were about 850 men, women and children, who were housed near the freight depot. A great many of them were Jews from Liepāja, for example the lawyer Kaganski, the writer Julius Rabinowitsch, the Schwab boys* and others. Among the Riga Jews sent to this barracks camp were Robert Schlomowitsch, Borkum and Jewoschker. The latter considered no effort too great to organize religious services again and again.



Bernhard Boris (Bubi) Schwab

* [Ed.: the brothers Bernhard and George Schwab]

Everyone lived there in the barracks, but in comparison to other satellite camps, these living conditions were not bad at all. The camp elder was the German Jew Steinberg, and the camp commander was the SS man and Reich Railroad official Keller.* In addition, Chief Inspector Schibbe from Eberswalde had a particularly bad reputation. For even the smallest infraction people were transported back to *Kaiserwald* and then, for punishment, moved on to *Stützpunkt* (for example, Leib Saminski and Mote Neu from Liepāja).

On 20 July 1944 Rafael Schub, Per Ostrowski and Remigolski escaped. The latter hid in the home of a Latvian in the city. After the Latvian had taken his valuables away from him he turned him out onto the street. Remigolski was caught and shot.

In the Reich Railroad camp as in other camps, a large-scale extermination action was carried out in July 1944; about 350 people lost their lives in this action. The others were transported via Stutthof to Stolp. They worked there under very difficult conditions, and only a few of them survived.

k) Balastdamm (Balasta Dam)

The Commerce Department of the higher-ranking SS had moved its camp to the banks of the Daugava River. Here Jews were used for transport work and other types of work. As long as the ghetto existed, a work crew went out from it every day to work here. Later, after *Kaiserwald* was set up, a small camp for about 300 persons, including thirty women, was set up directly on the Balasta Dam. These people worked not only for the higher-ranking SS but also in the nearby Zunda sawmill. Their work consisted of sorting lumber (they had to pull logs out of the water onto land) and working in the carpentry workshops.

The inmates were housed in completely unhygienic barracks guarded by the Latvian SS. The local representative of the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp was *Unterscharführer* Decker, an extreme sadist. The post of camp elder was held by the Czech Jew Oppenheimer, and among those responsible for maintaining order inside the camp was a certain Gläser. The poor rations and the hard labor caused very many cases of illness, most of which ended in death after the people were taken to *Kaiserwald*. Among the inmates of the Balasta Dam satellite camp were Rabbi Gawartin of Kreuzburg with his brother, Director Bergmann of the public college-preparatory school, the teacher Gramm, the three Kor brothers, Itrow, Egber and others. At one point a certain Schmuljan es-

* [Ed.: Köhler]

caped from this camp. Because they too were suspected of plotting to escape, Abe Lif and Gramm were taken to *Kaiserwald* and from there to *Stützpunkt*.

On 7 August 1944 the whole camp was transported to the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp. All of these people were put for several days into what was called the "barrack of the dead". Because large-scale extermination actions were being carried out in *Kaiserwald* at that time, the entire barracks camp was to be either gassed or shot. Thanks to an Aryan inmate twenty-two teenagers were selected for work, including the three Kor brothers, the Beljak brothers and others. Two teenagers, Jachnin and a twelve-year-old boy, both of them from Dvinsk, had hidden in the latrine pit. They were pulled out, completely covered with filth, and sent to be liquidated.

That was the sad end of this small satellite camp.

I) Dünawerke (Daugava Factories)

*In Dinawerke arum tajch un Wald
Zajnen do idn* fun gor der Welt
Arbeiten alle schwer und in Kelt...*

*(At the Dünawerke, surrounded by water and forest,
There are Jews from all over the world
They do hard labor in the cold...)
(A hymn)*

A satellite camp called the Dünawerke was set up in the former building of the large Prowodnik rubber factory, which was known throughout the world.

About 800 men and women, mostly women, were sent to work there. Among them were a great many women from Vilno (the sisters Henia and Fania Durmaschkina, Esia Raichel, Ester Lipow and others) and from Germany. Among the men from Latvia were Sascha Kaufmann from Auce, Salzman, Lewenstein from Jelgava and others. The camp elder was the Jew Josef Kussmann. The overseer was *Unterscharführer* Becker, who, thanks to the German Jewish woman Liesel, did not pay too much attention to the barracks camp. This clever woman administered the affairs of the Jews in the camp very skillfully. All the inmates were housed in quite decent rooms, and in addition to the starvation rations they received it was possible for them to acquire food elsewhere. They had to do both heavy labor and easier kinds of

* [Ed.: Idn]

work, and had contact with many Aryans from foreign countries who were also housed in this barracks camp but were free.

Medical services were provided initially by Dr. Berkowitsch and later on by Dr. Jakobsohn. On 8 February 1944, 102 persons were taken away from this camp to the Dundaga satellite camp. Among them were Lewenstein, Pitum, Moisej Igdalski and others. Dr. Berkowitsch was also among them; he was tortured in Dundaga and sent back half-dead to Kaiserwald, where he was killed under unknown circumstances.

In the summer of 1944 the Dünawerke barracks camp was closed down. The inmates were taken to Siauliai in Lithuania and from there to Stutthof. Regrettably, one of those who died there was the pretty Liesel.

m) The Dondangen (Dundaga) Satellite or Labor Camp

In the *Kaiserwald* card file Dundaga was called a work camp, but I can only call it an extermination camp, for it had practically nothing to do with work and a great deal to do with extermination! Only a few work crews went to work, and all of the others worked inside the camp. Dundaga is a well-known fishing town near the Baltic Sea, not far from the well-known Dundaga Forest. Formerly, prominent Latvian public men went boar hunting there. People said that Göring too once went on a boar hunt there.

Now a training ground for some of Adolf Hitler's *Leibstandarte* (personal SS guards), the tank grenadiers, was set up there. But this plan could not be implemented because of the clayey soil, into which the "victorious tigers" (the tanks) sank too deeply in their training maneuvers.

The actual "host" of the Jews was an SS division that also served as a guard unit. The whole division took orders from the commandant of Kaiserwald. Initially it was commanded by the SS man Greschel (Kroeschel) and later on by "Iron Gustav". There was no permanent housing at all. People lived summer and winter in tents whose floors were strewn with straw that did not give sufficient protection from the damp earth. A great hardship was the scarcity of water, not only for washing but also for drinking.

The work consisted of building barracks for the soldiers stationed there. There were also a few other work crews, for example one that put up telegraph poles from Talsi to Stende and another that worked in the construction yard. The rations were so miserable that many people fell ill.

There was no clinic. The sick inmates were given only two days off work and then sent to the central clinic in Kaiserwald. Thus Kaiserwald constantly

delivered new people, but Dundaga sent back only half-dead or entirely dead ones. The Dundaga commanders made sure of that. The guards also made cruel sport of the Jews. They forced them to laugh, to cry, to dance or to do other tricks. Because they were unable to take off their clothes and wash, the men and women suffered constantly from lice; because of the lice they had many festering sores. Nobody could last long in this hell; within a short period of time one would become a passive "Mussulman". The women, some of whom were especially pretty, soon resembled witches.

In their desperation the inmates of this camp took all kinds of risks, including going to the nearby villages to scavenge food. For this crime the Riga dentist Scheinesohn was hanged. In total hopelessness a Czech Jewish doctor hanged himself from a tree in the forest. Dr. Rogalin, who had been hanged by his feet as punishment, withstood this torture and survived.

Once the inmates had high-ranking visitors, namely Sauer and Krebsbach, and this visit too cost human lives.

As the front moved closer in May 1944, the barracks camp was evacuated and preparations were made to move it to Stutthof. At that time about 100 people tried to escape. But when they reached the front they were caught and shot. Many of the others, who were moved to Liepāja, died on the way. The "Dundaga veteran" Josef Behrmann survived.

n) Popevaln (Popevalns)

Cu wejst – Du id**? Wu blut schrajt fun di griber
 Fun masen-griber, Kworim lang un brejt,
 Dort tojt-gefaln zajnen dajne brider
 Dort lign tate-mame dajne tojt!
 Cu*** wejst - Du id****? Wu es blondzen noch neschomes
 Farpajniht fun muter, foter, kind
 Dort schrajen Himlen un die Erd: NEKOME!
 Nekome far di schojderhafte Zind!*

*(Do you know, Jew, where blood is screaming from the pits
 From mass graves, graves long and wide,
 There are your brothers, fallen dead,*

* [Ed.: Tzu]

** [Ed.: Id]

*** [Ed.: Tzu]

**** [Ed.: Id]

*There lie your dead father and mother!
 Do you know, Jew, where the souls are wandering
 Of tortured mother, father, child?
 There heaven and earth scream: VENGEANCE!
 Vengeance for the hideous sins!
 "Mein Cawoe"* (My Testament), Jakob Rassein,
 Popevalns concentration camp 1943*

Near Dundaga there was another satellite camp: Poperwalen, to which Jews were brought from Kaiserwald. Although these inmates worked under somewhat more bearable conditions, nonetheless the mortality rate was very high. The camp elder was the Jew Scheinberger, and the commander was the SS Rottenführer Baufeldt. For listening to a secret radio station, Soloweitschik, Korotkin and others were shot, and the industrialist Tankelowitsch from Livonia was killed in a work crew that worked nearby. Before their liquidation, the two barracks camps were merged and then evacuated together.

o) Other Satellite Camps (Kasernierungen)

During the summers between 1941 and 1943, Jews were sent from the ghetto to cut peatmoss.

Every summer a large satellite camp was set up under the command of the camp representative Schwabe in the peat factory of Sloka (see the chapter "Bloody Sloka"). Jews also worked in the peat factory at Olaine. The post of camp elder was held there one summer by Fisch and then by Magon-Polski from Vilno.

During a visit by *Kommandant* Roschmann and Gymnich in 1943, the singer Karp was shot in Sloka because five eggs had been found in his possession.

There were also camps for peatmoss-cutting in Ploce and Aizpute in Kurzeme. The conditions there were not bad, and the main thing was one's awareness that the murderers of Riga were far away. Four Jews escaped from Aizpute. They hid for a long time in the old fortress of Aizpute, but were finally found and shot by the Latvians in January 1944. Those who died were the Usdin brothers from Višķi, the medical aide Heifetz and Gotz.

After the sugar beet harvest Jews were also sent to the sugar factory in Jelgava. As they worked there they learned the exact procedure of sugar production, so that later on they were able to manufacture sugar themselves by primitive methods in the ghetto.

* [Ed.: Tzevue – testament]

A large satellite camp with workers from the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp was set up in the paper factory at Sloka. They lived and worked under very difficult conditions.

There was also a satellite camp in the Meteor rubber factory (of Sobolewitsch). During the final days before it was liquidated, Fedja Lew escaped together with a woman from Vienna and a German doctor and his wife. The doctor and his wife were unlucky: they were discovered and transported via *Kaiserwald* to *Stützpunkt*.*

The large TWL satellite camp was located near *Kaiserwald*. Mostly German Jewish men and women worked there. The camp elder was Kagan, who had been an employee of the Letre Company. He had a very sadistic nature, and nobody could elude his hands (I. Springenfeldt and others). The reader will hear more about him in the chapter on Buchenwald and Magdeburg.

A small satellite camp consisting of more than 100 Latvian and Lithuanian Jews was put to work very close to Salaspils in the stone quarries of the Behm Company. Their camp elder was Jakobsohn (of the Riga Yacht Club). Until July 1944 we heard no more news at all about these people. Later, when the Aryan camp in Salaspils was liquidated, people reported that all of them had been shot.

The Evacuation

We were taken in trucks to the harbor. The route was already familiar to us from the daily work we had done there. We noticed that a large-scale voluntary evacuation was taking place in the city. Large carts loaded with suitcases and other baggage were being pulled to the harbor and the freight depot on Pulkveža Brieža Street. We also saw at the freight depot some trains that had already been prepared for the evacuation. I had no doubt that those who had our sisters and brothers on their conscience would now head for safety with our possessions. On the way we met Gymnich, the "terror of the ghetto", on a bicycle. He gave his "old acquaintances" a very sidelong look.

In the city center people were already busy setting up street barricades. Our truck was the first one to reach the harbor. The others followed one by one.

* [Ed.: Fedia Lew escaped in April. Mrs. Schwartz from Vienna, Lotte Adler from Cologne, Dr. Rolf and his wife Ruth Bischofswerder, also from Cologne, came back to *Kaiserwald* in July. At the end of August, these 4 escaped, hoping to be met by Janis Lipke. They met and he took Mrs. Schwartz to a safe house. When Lipke came for the others, they had been stopped by a German patrol and were brought back to *Kaiserwald*. The 2 women were shot and Dr. Bischofswerder was sent to *Stützpunkt*, where he was killed. Mrs. Schwartz came back to Vienna after the war and I met with her.]

The inmates of all the satellite camps arrived. We saw the large work crews from the AEG "women's cloister" and the Lenta barracks camp. All of them were still wearing their gray uniforms. Lenta's *Kommandant*, Scherwitz and company, arrived in elegant cars and took charge of their work crews. They brought all the machines with them, for they had been told that their factory would be set up again in Konitz – but this was not true.

All the supplies and machines were also brought from *Kaiserwald* and the other camps for loading. The riverbank swarmed with people, and many people who had not seen one another for a long time met here again. Many were wearing a double layer of clothing because they intended to try to escape. Unfortunately, this plan succeeded for only a few: Julius Kreitzer, Israeli, Pere-woski from Vilno and some others. Now and then we heard shots being fired by the guards, which apparently cost some people their lives. As for me, I was in total despair, but I decided to resign myself to my fate.

The ship that had already been prepared for us was a large military transport ship several stories high. The men were lodged on the bottom level and the women on the top one, but in the rest of the ship people could move about freely. There were no beds at all. For this purpose we had to lie down on the steel floor.

Goods were loaded all night into the lower part of the ship; even the cars were brought along, and we had to work hard helping to load them. Food was distributed the next morning. The German Jews were the only ones among us who were in quite good spirits. They felt they were leaving the damned East and returning to their homeland.* Large amounts of food were taken on board.

Finally it was our turn, and we boarded the ship via the gangway. As I climbed the gangway I did not turn around any more. I felt no desire to see the city one last time. I had only one thought in my head: maybe the Russians would reduce Riga to rubble. May the enemy, who had wanted to build a new life on our blood, now drown in his own blood!

That day was Erev Yom Kippur, the day before the Day of Atonement. In the good old days one would go on this day to the Mincha (afternoon prayer) and beat one's breast (*vide*). And sometimes people beat themselves in *malkes* (an act of repentance). Now this was no longer necessary, for we were beaten all year long anyway. The ship raised anchor and when the *Kol Nidre* (evening prayer on the Day of Atonement) was said we were already at sea. Religious

* [Ed.: Kaufmann, who disliked German Jews, had no idea how depressed they were, having to leave just when freedom was near. They had no illusions about their subsequent treatment in Germany.]

services were being held in every corner of the ship, and everywhere people lit small candles. All at once it was quiet and peaceful everywhere.

"*Kol nidrei we'esorei...*" (All vows, oaths, bonds...)

Everyone was weeping, including the women on the top deck. I did not go to prayers. I lay down on the steel floor, putting my prisoner's coat under me and using as a pillow my only piece of baggage, a loaf of bread and my bowl. Thus I lay sleepless for 24 hours until the *Neile*, or final prayer on the Day of Atonement. I didn't want to speak to anyone and I didn't do so. During the long, lonely hours I drew the balance sheet of my life (*cheschboin hanefesch*).

"*Jaale tachnuneinu meerew, wjowoj schawoscheinu mibojker!*" (O let our prayer ascend from eventime, and may our cry come in to Thee from dawn!) I still saw before me Cantor Joffe from the past years in the ghetto, wearing his coat and *Tallit*. He had not only sung this prayer but also wept together with all of us. Today we needed *schawoscheinu* (help) more than ever, but we had given up all hope of its arrival. It was already *Neile*. People wept, people cried out: perhaps there was help for us after all? But no *t'kia* (Shofar signal at the end) was there. "*Bschono hazios be'erez Isroel*" (This year in the land of Israel). We could no longer wait till next year, we had to be freed this year (*bschono hazois*)!

That night we dropped anchor off Liepāja. It turned out that several evacuation ships had been attacked by the Russians. Later, people said that two had been sunk, but we didn't know whether this was true. In any case, we were lucky. We sailed on, and we landed in Danzig on the third day. We left the ship and spent the whole day in the harbor. That evening we were loaded onto old fishing cutters; since there was not enough room for all of us, some of the women were put onto completely open boats. Thus our newly created flotilla sailed toward Stutthof. This trip, which would have taken ten to fifteen hours in normal times, lasted four days. Some of the time we were sailing on the open sea, and some of the time through various locks. The chains connecting us to the tugboat kept breaking and it took hours to repair them. No food of any kind, and above all no drinking water, had been provided for us. At night there was still a light frost. The poor women sat on their benches starving and shivering from the cold, and it was no wonder that some of them died of these hardships.

As for me, I was lucky, for I was on the steam-driven tugboat that was carrying all of the provisions. Of course we had enough to eat, only there was no bread.

At last we saw a large sign: Stutthof!

Part IV

The "Stutthof" Concentration Camp (Waldheim)

I.

Our "flotilla", consisting of skiffs, ordinary rowboats and some old small ships, slowly approached the shore. From afar we saw a large sign: Stutthof. Hundreds of armed SS men were arriving to receive their "guests". Suddenly there came an order: "Unload!" Our guards chased us out of the ship, using their truncheons and rifle butts. We ran across the slippery boards of the skiffs, many of us falling into the water. But what did that matter? The sun was strong and it soon dried us off. We lined up in a long and wide column five abreast, with the women in front. The German Jews were very excited, because they were stepping onto the holy soil of their old homeland. Their faces wore expressions of great satisfaction. Free at last of the damned East, home at last in their native land! This homeland received them "well" indeed, and their joy was soon over!* We marched along a beautiful asphalt road that led through the small town toward the concentration camp. Everything was deserted. Only now and then we saw an isolated person, who would look at us with pity. A couple of captured English and American soldiers, with hanging heads and tears in their eyes, met us on our way. They knew only too well that only a very few people from that long column would return.

II.

Now we marched past the lovely mansion that housed the administrative offices of *Waldruhe* (Forest Peace). No one could imagine that behind it stood a cruel concentration camp that held tens of thousands of victims. It was fenced in with a double row of electrified barbed wire. High watchtowers stood around the edges, and from afar Stutthof looked like a city in itself. It consisted of a main street and many side streets; there were barracks everywhere. The women's camp was separate. On the left side a new Stutthof was being built. We saw here gigantic stone buildings and large kitchens that had not yet

* [Ed.: I had several arguments over these sentences with Max Kaufmann. After 4 days on those smelly boats, everyone was glad to be on land, not only the German Jews. At the same time, all of us were aware that we had been moved from Riga, just as liberation was imminent. I told him that he had let his dislike for the German Jews color his report on our combined suffering. His reply, in 1970, was conciliatory. He said that "this was the way he saw it at the time". He also said that "he would change several observations if he could".]

been finished. Apparently an especially large concentration camp had been planned.

Surrounded by SS men, we went through the mighty gate and reached the camp's main street. The women were ordered to march on to their camp. It was completely still in the camp, for everyone was away at work. The few who had stayed in the barracks were the room representatives, and now they came up to meet the new arrivals. We noticed that each one carried a truncheon, which was probably part of the concentration camp uniform. They talked to us to find out whether we had anything to make cigarettes with, and explained that it would be taken away from us anyway – which in this case wasn't true. Two policemen also came by to satisfy their curiosity. These policemen*, German prisoners, were equipped with especially long truncheons, like animal tamers in a circus. They were accompanied by large dogs who seemed ready to eat us up for the smallest infraction. The policemen jeered at us and surely must have thought to themselves, "Now there'll be work for us." And that's how it was.

As it happened, the brief registration procedure was not followed by a thorough body search. This was very lucky, for it gave us an opportunity to smuggle some valuable items into hiding places so that later on we could buy something to eat with these reserves.

We saw we had been badly deceived, and regretted that we had not risked an escape attempt in Riga. We also felt that here a different wind was blowing than in the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp, where every Latvian Jew still had a connection with the outside world. We were led to the large Barrack No. 3, which was divided into two parts, A and B. We were "allowed" to enter it – but how to settle in was another matter! We slept four to a narrow bed. How was this possible? Well, we didn't sleep at all. And I was especially lucky, because I was assigned a neighbor (Sachodnik) who normally needed a whole bed for himself. Inmates from other barracks came to visit us and informed us of our sad fate. "Here, here," they pointed to the large oven, "is the end of all of us!" Thousands of our brothers had had to go through this oven! They told us of other terrible things, but we were still "naïve" and couldn't believe them. But only too soon we were forced to realize that they were telling the truth.

* [Ed.: camp policemen]

III.

The main contingent of the prisoners in the camp consisted of Poles. But besides them, all the peoples of the earth were represented. One could even meet people from Tunis and Algiers. From afar we saw a large group in uniform. It consisted of Norwegian policemen. We heard that they had been brought here because they had tried to revolt. But their situation was better than ours. The world cared about them. They sometimes received packages from the Red Cross! We seemed to have nobody: no one cared about us, and the world seemed to have forgotten us entirely!

Our Jewish barrack stood across from one for Aryan Poles who couldn't work. Every morning several corpses were carried out of it on stretchers. They went "through the oven" immediately. The room elder of this barrack and his "assistants" had beaten them till they were half-dead. Yes, the only language that ruled the camp was that of the truncheon. Our room representative "Bogus", an Aryan, could not cope with us in spite of his truncheon. So he appointed some of our VIPs with their blue caps to help him. They too were much better off than we were.

In the evening the commandos came back from their work sites. All the roads were swarming with people. We realized that tens of thousands of prisoners lived here. A large column of women marched down the wide road to the women's camp. SS girls accompanied them. During the day they had to work in the ABA (Army Clothing Department) commando. We heard a mixture of all the languages of the world.

Because we had no assigned numbers as yet, we were forbidden to leave the barrack; nonetheless, we walked around a bit to size up the situation. We were chased by policemen and hounded and bitten by the dogs, but this was an everyday event and nobody was particularly impressed by it.

When the surviving members of the first transport to Stutthof and the few Jews from Estonia heard of our arrival, they visited us. We barely recognized them! Those pale faces! Those filthy, ragged outfits from the time of Napoleon, those high, round caps! They were sheer caricatures! We "new ones" still laughed, but they no longer had smiles on their faces. When I saw our old acquaintance from Riga, the elegant Dr. Jakobsohn, dressed like a circus clown in short pants, I too shed tears.

Some of our artists (Schelkan and Arnov) sometimes earned a plate of soup from the room representative with their music. The prominent boxer Kagan, who had sadistically demonstrated his strength in Riga and would do so again

in Magdeburg, sometimes earned a bit of food. He had meanwhile become a singer. Our room elder, Bogus, also displayed his cruel instincts. For every small infraction he would order us to troop out to the street. At his familiar command, "All Jews sit down!" we had to squat down, and he and his assistants would then beat us on our heads with their truncheons.

IV.

Now the great evening roll call began in Stutthof. We lined up ten abreast, each group next to its barrack. We were counted and written down in the register until the registrar came to pick up his report. It was quiet throughout the camp. "Caps off!" The registrar arrived. The report on one barrack was correct, the report on another wasn't, so we had to stand at attention for a long, long time on our weak feet. Finally a trumpet sounded from the large watchtower at the entrance gate. It told the world in all directions that the great roll call was over. We felt relieved. The trumpet played the familiar tune of the Marjacki Cloister in Cracow, which was transmitted every noon on the radio. Now began a race to the barracks to grab a place to sleep. Because there was not enough room for everyone, many had to spend the night on the floor. Actually, this was the best place to sleep, because at least there you slept alone. People put their shoes under their heads to help themselves sleep "soundly".

We were awakened at four a.m.! Without enough sleep and totally exhausted, we had to get up in a few seconds. As we left the barrack, each person received his bread ration at the door. Sometimes a loaf of bread had to be shared by five people, sometimes by six. This depended entirely on the room elder, who kept whatever he didn't distribute. He then bought gold and other valuables at the expense of our stomachs. Of course nobody dared to complain, for we feared that if we did so we would "go through the oven". Later, we had to share a bowl of coffee among four people. Everything had to be eaten on the street in the dark. There we also relieved ourselves. The toilet was a story in itself. We had to get permission to get into it at all. Everything was made even more difficult by an overseer (from Vilno). Once, we rejoiced as a certain part of his body was brutally "worked over". There was no provision whatsoever to enable us to wash ourselves, and we were not allowed to enter any other barracks. Shaving was also a great problem. We had to look "young", so we scratched off our beards with any knife that came to hand, which left our faces very cut up. Once we had left our barrack we were not allowed to enter it again. So we were outdoors from very early morning, when it was still dark, till after the evening roll call. Only the VIPs enjoyed the

privilege of being allowed to remain in the barracks. The weather was already growing colder, and to "lighten our load" the camp administrators decided to take our coats away from us. We formed "ovens" to warm ourselves: that is, we stood in a tight circle, pressed close together, in order to warm one another.

We still had no numbers, and so we were not yet sent to work. They began to register us under the direction of a Polish Catholic priest who was lodged in our barrack. This took a very long time, and those who were allowed to do this work were fortunate, for while they were doing it they could stay in the barrack. Unfortunately, I had no luck: nobody paid any attention to my efforts, and so I was not chosen to be one of the "registrars". The same priest also organized a group of ten men to pray in the barrack. Suddenly everyone wanted to pray! Not out of piety, but in order to warm themselves up a bit. However, the priest did not select people at random; he already knew his "customers". The first ones to be selected were always the son of the prominent Mr. Dubin and Dubin's secretary Mr. Golowtschiner. They were the "real" prayer reciters. They had great difficulties with the rations because they ate only kosher food, so in this camp they were starving.

During the first few days the Latvian "aristocrats" also visited us. They were the "honor prisoners", and they wore special yellow armbands. There were also other "aristocrats" from other countries. All of them looked well, so apparently they were not doing too badly. Among them was the son of the former Latvian President, Prof. Čakste; the well-known revolutionary Bruno Kalniņš; the former Latvian ambassador to Sweden, Sēja; the former Minister of Transport, the engineer Einberg; and the former director of Riga's largest chocolate factory, Ķuze. They visited their *puikas* (boys) to receive messages of greeting from Riga. We received these people very coolly and did not get involved in any long conversations with them.

V.

Noontime at the camp! There was no set lunchtime for us non-workers: the room elder fetched our lunch whenever he felt like it. Everyone fought for the privilege of carrying the kettle. The reason was that while doing this errand it was possible to see the women and perhaps exchange a few words with them through the barbed-wire fence. The kitchen stood directly next to the women's camp. The food always consisted of thin vegetable soup, but to us hungry people even this tasted good. We stood for hours in long rows to receive it. Afterwards the bowls were collected. This was a new chore – being a "bowl col-

lector" – for which one received an extra portion of soup. But not everyone was lucky enough to get to do it. From all sides came the cry, "*Wolne miski!*" (Empty bowls!) Of course we ate without spoons. Some people drove bargains, trading their soup for a portion of bread or vice versa. In other barracks, lunch was brought in the early morning, poured into large wooden barrels, and covered with blankets.

Many of us became ill because of the wet, cold weather. But there was no infirmary for the Jews.* If a person became ill, he went "through the ovens" at once! But our doctors managed to set up several beds in a corner for the sick people in our barrack. As soon as an SS man turned up, all the sick people ran away, for they feared having their numbers written down. Once an SS man really did find some sick people and immediately wrote down the numbers of these unfortunates. That very evening, before the roll call, they were taken away and gassed. Except for the times when we fetched the lunch kettle, the only connection with the women was through the children, who carried notes back and forth. Whether the children were allowed to go to their parents or not depended entirely on the mood of the SS girls at any given moment.

VI.

After several days the last Jews arrived from the HKP barracks camp in Riga. From them I heard that just before they left, my special friend Schmähhmann (from Liepāja), who was also well-known to all the others, had become emotionally deranged. Thereupon he was shot immediately and buried near *Kaiserwald*. Several young men from the *Kaiserwald* camp who had tried to escape had also been mercilessly killed. They had even had to dig their own graves beforehand. In contrast to us, the newly arrived group of Riga Jews was searched very thoroughly. They had everything taken away from them and were forced to wear different clothes. They were also assigned to another barrack. Of the few women in the group, to my knowledge only Mrs. L. Misroch and her daughter survived. All the others died of typhoid fever and starvation. Forty-eight Latvian Jews who were unable to work were also sent to Stutthof from Königsberg in eastern Prussia. They had been told they were being sent here to "recuperate". They looked terrible, being only skin and bones. Some of them were sent to their eternal "recuperation" the very day they arrived.

* [Ed.: The Jewish women, unlike their male counterparts, did have an infirmary and were taken from there either to the gas chamber, if still alive, or to the crematorium.]

The next day it was the others' turn, as the gas chambers could only handle a certain number of people per day.

Two "Aryans" arrived separately from Riga: the well-known Professor Idelsohn and the industrialist Milmann. The former was known to be a committed Jew, but the latter was a self-professed Latvian. But the fact that Milmann had been baptized more than fifty years ago had obviously been of no avail. Professor Idelsohn had been the only Jew who was not sent to the ghetto. This had been managed by the children of his second wife (a German), who were high-ranking party members in Berlin. But in the end even they could not help him any longer. How often had we seen Professor Idelsohn in Riga running after the Jewish work crews to give them a package of bread! He had repeatedly asked to be put into the ghetto too. Now at last he was sharing the fate of all the Jews, for he had been sent to Stutthof. Three days after his arrival he died of a heart attack and was cremated immediately.

During our time there, even Latvian criminals were brought to Stutthof. It was the Poles who received them "properly" in the barrack assigned to them. The Poles justified this by claiming that the Latvians had helped to put down the Polish revolt in Warsaw, and had also run riot in the Warsaw ghetto with the utmost cruelty.

VII.

In the meantime, I was "naturalized" as a Stutthof resident. I received a new name: "**Prisoner No. 96046**". My number was written on my chest and my trousers. Now we waited for our "invitation" to go to work. We found out from the Labor Authority that our transport was one of the "valuable" ones, as it included a number of specialists. For this reason we would be sent very soon to work outside the camp. There was no food for those who didn't work, so for the time being we were sent every morning to a variety of work stations. There was no system for assigning work, so everything was a matter of luck. Today one might have easy work, tomorrow heavy labor and vice versa.

Many prisoners competed for the job of unloading things from the skiffs. Sometimes during this work it was possible to filch things that could be traded for bread. One day, as I was working on a skiff with my friend Israelit (from Liepāja), I "organized" two left-hand gloves, but this turned out badly, for I was discovered and badly beaten.

Another time, I was assigned to the lumberyard work crew. We had to carry large beams on our shoulders and stack them up in the lumberyard. All this was done under the supervision of Polish foremen, who beat us with large

wooden clubs. They explained to us that we were lucky, because before we came there had been a rule that each foreman had to bring back a few corpses from the work crew. These corpses were carried by the first row of the work column. The work was almost impossible for us to bear physically, but we used the last remnants of our strength so as not to have our numbers written down and then be gassed the same evening.

Two huts stood in the woods near our lumberyard. These were the brothels for the SS men. Women of all nationalities, but no Jewish women, were brought to these huts. These women did not look bad, so in terms of food and clothing they must not have had a bad time of it.

Then there was also the notorious work crew No. 105. It was especially feared, and when the foremen of this work crew came to fetch us for work, everyone tried to avoid being selected. But once I was fetched for this work crew nonetheless. We were driven through the large camp gate under heavy guard, and after a long march through the forest we reached our new work station already exhausted. Here we were searched, and everything we owned was taken away from us. Now the *katorga* (unbearably hard labor) began! Once again we had to carry heavy logs on our shoulders, but this time it was from one hill to another. We were not allowed to drag them down from the hills, which would have been much easier. Although we threw all our strength into it, at last we could do it no longer. Thereupon we were beaten murderously with large truncheons, but even that made no difference: we simply couldn't work any more. Now the sadistic foreman made the whole work crew line up and asked each one what his profession was. He made our comrades Schalit and Zalel Garber, who said they were musicians, go off to the side, and then he began to drill them. They were ordered to run, he beat them, they were ordered to throw themselves to the ground, creep along on their bellies, run again, and so on. I could hardly bring myself to look at this, and prayed for death to release them! - Fortunately, just then a truck arrived. We had to carry logs to this truck and load them onto it. Then it was noon, and we returned to the concentration camp.

As we marched through the forest the German foreman talked to us. "What kind of people are you?" he asked us. "You must have no God at all, for if you had one, he surely couldn't look on and see how you're being treated." I thought to myself: "This murderer and sadist is right, for doesn't the world know what's happening to us at all? Aren't there any Jews left who know us and want to help us?" But now, as I write these lines, I have changed my opinion totally. I have just read the report on the trial in Poland of the murderers of

Stutthof. All of them were condemned to die on the gallows. These cold-blooded slavedrivers, who had killed thousands and thousands of human beings, went to their deaths like the cowards they were. Some Poles who had cruelly mistreated their brothers were also hanged along with the SS men and SS girls.

I would also like to mention something I found out recently: during the war the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress (which is based in New York) took measures to save the Jews. The Latvian Jew Hillel Storch was involved in these efforts. The son of a respected family from Dvinsk, he had escaped to Sweden with his wife (née Westermann) shortly before the war.

When the horrible news about the fate of his coreligionists reached him, he made contact with Himmler as early as 1943 and later on in 1945, thanks to the mediation of the head of German counterespionage, Schellenberg, and of Dr. Kersten (Himmler's personal physician). He succeeded in more or less postponing part of the extermination, and many of us perhaps owe our lives to him.

VIII.

One day the announcement came: "Jews are not to go to work. At eight o'clock all Jews are to line up in closed ranks on the camp's main street!" The inmates of all the Jewish barracks marched in rows to the street, as they had been ordered to do. They were made to line up according to countries, the Latvians separately, the Germans separately, and so on. A large, high table was brought, and the representatives of the Labor Authority appeared carrying long truncheons. Along with them came some very well-dressed civilians, accompanied by SS men. The civilians were representatives of a factory that needed workers. The slave trade began. We were told that various Jewish skilled craftsmen, but no Germans, would be needed for work in a factory. After hearing this announcement the German Jews hung their heads in dejection, not knowing what to do. But the rest of us thought to ourselves: "So much for your homeland and your 'warm welcome'!"*

But our VIPs with their blue caps from the Kaiserwald concentration camp, who were always trying to enrich themselves at the expense of our stomachs, now as ever made sure that some of the Germans were included. For example, the German Jew Oskar Salomon - whose sadistic nature we got to know all too well later on in Magdeburg - managed to smuggle himself into our transport.

* [Ed.: The only person who might have had such thoughts, was Kaufmann. Other Latvian Jews were not as ferocious in their opinion of their German fellow Jews.]

Now the call rang out: "Skilled craftsmen! Mechanics, shoemakers, tailors and others!" Those who volunteered had to run to the table as fast as they could. It was immediately obvious who could run fast and who couldn't. Those who couldn't were told to go off to the side. Now each of us tried, with his last ounce of strength, to pass this test. Even cripples tried it, but they were sent back immediately.

This selection process for the work crew lasted three days. It was a rest period for us, because (1) we didn't have to work, and (2) we were safe from beatings. In the meantime we found out that the selected workers would be taken to Magdeburg. I had tried by every possible means to be one of them. My efforts were successful. I thought to myself: winter's coming on, and they'll certainly put us to work in closed rooms inside that factory. My supposition was correct.

IX.

The lists of workers were drawn up quickly. Now we had to wait for the trucks into which we would be loaded. Three hundred women, mostly from Vilno and Hungary, and a single small Latvian boy, Sima, were also in our transport. Because the planned departure could take place any day and any hour, we were not sent to do any work for the time being. After several weeks had passed in this way, the Labor Authority decided that our idleness had lasted too long and that we would be sent to work again. In the meantime two other Jewish transports, of women and men, departed. One was headed by a certain Glücksmann and the other by the notorious Kassel. These people worked near Danzig under extremely difficult conditions (see the chapter "Via Stutthof - Burggraben... - Lauenburg to Freedom"). Only a few of them survived, and many died of starvation, the cold and the beatings.

After the first transport had gone, there was somewhat more space in our barrack. Now once again we went to work regularly. A work crew that drove to Elbing every day had fairly good conditions there. The ABA also set up work stations and employed many of our people, for example the engineer Antikol, Springenfeld* and others. Unfortunately, none of them survived.

There was a new work crew, the so-called "potato commando". Cars loaded with potatoes would arrive on our narrow-gauge railroad. They had to be unloaded and clamped. The work in itself would not have been difficult, if only the many Polish overseers had not beaten us constantly with large trun-

* [Ed.: Springenfeld survived, but by then Kaufmann's book had already been printed.]

cheons. They chased us and beat us, shouting, "*Ale jusz, ale jeszcze!*" (Do it, do it again!*) This "*Ale jusz, ale jeszcze*" rang in our ears for a long time. The only good thing about this work crew was that now and then we were able to filch a raw potato, a beet or a carrot. We had to eat them at once on the spot; it was dangerous to take them anywhere, for we were searched thoroughly as we left our work station. If even the smallest thing was found on us, we were punished immediately. For me this work crew was not bad; it even provided me with a *maline* (hiding place). This was the *maline*: I was ordered to take potatoes to the pigsty, and I could use this opportunity to take for myself some of the potatoes that had been cooked for the animals. To enable my comrades to share this "good fortune", I took a different one with me every day.

X.

In the meantime, the news arrived that Riga had already been occupied by the Russians. Of course we rejoiced greatly, but at the same time we were angry all over again that we had not attempted to escape while we were still in Riga. But now it was too late to change things.

One evening all the inmates of the concentration camp were ordered to line up on the camp's main road. Not only the main road but also the side streets swarmed with people. We could see a gallows in the distance. Two Russians who had resisted an SS man were to be hanged. This "just" verdict was read out in three languages (German, Polish and Russian). The German camp elder put the ropes around their necks with his own hands, and a moment later the two young men were dead. We were forced to witness another execution as well.

After that I was put into a construction work crew. A new factory was being built behind the camp. I was ordered to carry lime. The foreman noticed that this work was much too hard for my physical strength and wrote down my number. At once I sensed danger and asked him for another job. Thereupon he ordered my comrade Hahn and me to carry bricks to the second floor. Hahn told me he was ill, so I was the only "strong" one. We labored and struggled, using all our strength. Fortunately it grew dark soon, and the work crew had to return to the camp. Our joy was boundless. In this way, people struggled to survive every day, for in spite of all the cruelties we wanted to live.

Shortly before our departure for Magdeburg, more than a thousand Jews came to Stutthof from the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp. They in-

* [Ed.: real meaning: But now, but now again! – Aber jetzt, aber noch einmal!]

cluded people of all nationalities, but most of them were Greeks and Hungarians. I also met some people from our region (Bialystok). They told us about horrible things. Until then I had believed that there was nothing more horrible than Stutthof, but after hearing their reports I knew better. In Stutthof hundreds of human beings went "through the ovens" every day, but there it was thousands. At the special railroad station of Auschwitz the transports were received with music, and to music the rows of women, men and children were taken to the gas chambers. I heard very gruesome stories. Unlike the inmates of other concentration camps, the inmates of Auschwitz had their numbers tattooed on their wrists. * I found out that they numbered in the hundreds of thousands. The new arrivals were not put to work until they had been "naturalized". So they wandered around every day in the street next to their barracks in the cold and damp.

XI.

The women's situation was very similar to the men's. Their quarters were just as crowded as ours. Specially trained SS girls wearing black capes whipped them with leather straps. When we went past we often saw the poor women doing gymnastics in the street all day long. Besides those who had come with us, we also saw many women from Lithuania (Kovno) and Lodz (Poland). There was a separate barrack for the women from Hungary and the ones who were unable to work. Every evening we saw a truck packed full of sick women drive past, with half-sick women dragging themselves along behind the truck. All of them were moving toward the gas chambers. Because they knew what was in store for them, they were weeping and moaning. But the SS men and girls who accompanied them had no sympathy for them. I can still see those pretty women's faces before me today. But even those who were spared the gas chambers were overtaken by their fate. They died of starvation and typhus. During my time there, a women's transport was also sent to Thorn (see the chapter on the AEG barracks camp). These women had to work under harsh conditions in a factory that had been evacuated from Riga.

XII.

An order came: "Prepare for a transport." After a long period of waiting, we now had to leave the notorious Stutthof. Before this happened, we were led into the "bath", which ended as always with beating and torments. We re-

* [Ed.: The numbers were tattooed on the forearm.]

ceived "new" clothing. Fortunately, in the process I received a lambskin jacket which I would also use as a blanket in the future. In the large square we were searched once again and then loaded, under heavy guard, into open freight cars on the narrow-gauge railroad. The man appointed to lead the transport was the notorious SS man and murderer from Riga "Iron Gustav" (commandant of Dundaga and "specialist for shots to the neck", as he called himself). We were also accompanied by the SS man Hoffmann, who had carried out the large extermination action in Strazdumuiža, and by the sadist Schuller from the *Kaiserwald* concentration camp.

From afar we saw the place where we had worked in the "potato comando". Now the Jews who had been brought from Auschwitz were working there. We heard only screams, accompanied by the unforgettable refrain:

"Ale juzs, ale jeszcze!" (Do it, do it again! – But now, but now again!)

The "Buchenwald" Concentration Camp ("Satellite Camp Magdeburg")

I.

"The wheels must roll!": that was Germany's motto. Our wheels rolled very fast along the stretch to Magdeburg. I barely knew the name "Magdeburg"; I only remembered from Polish history that the Polish general Josef Pilsudski had occupied the fortress of Magdeburg. Shortly after our departure, we encountered at a station on the way a large women's transport bound for Stutthof. We pitied every one of these women, for we knew what awaited them there. We ourselves had no idea either of what the future would bring us, but in any case we imagined that Magdeburg would be better than Stutthof.

Fairly soon, we left the small-gauge railroad and were loaded into large cattle cars on the main railroad line. We received food, and in our wagon I had to distribute it. Now we rolled along at express-train speed. Apparently no time was to be lost, for people were waiting for us to begin work. The trip was supposed to last three days, but we had already reached our destination of Magdeburg on the second evening. There was a general blackout in Magdeburg, so we could recognize nothing but the small spotlights that lit our path. Besides representatives of the factory, a group of guards had come to receive the new arrivals. We lined up five abreast, with the women in front, and marched to our new camp, which was supposed to be situated near the factory. There was not just one camp but several, separated from one another by high

walls. Our women were put together with Aryan women in a separate women's camp, but they were housed in special barracks for Jews.

The sign at the camp entrance read: "Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Outer Camp Magdeburg". At this entrance gate, as everywhere else so far, stood a small special building for the guards, who had to supervise the entrance and the entire camp. The Riga boxer and sadist Kagan* was appointed camp elder. For support, he surrounded himself with a staff of people whom he ordered to deal with us as harshly as possible. The rations were very bad: 150 to 200 grams of bread a day and watery soup. Sometimes there was also a bit of margarine or other small items. But we comforted ourselves with the thought that our rations would certainly be increased at the factory, since it was impossible to work on only this small amount of food. Unfortunately, this assumption was not justified. The living conditions were just as bad as before. In the meantime, the factory managers sent the foremen of all the departments to view the new workers. The foremen appeared; we awaited them lined up in rows, and all those who would be working in the individual departments were selected. Of course we had no idea which departments were especially favorable, especially with regard to the most important thing for us: where we would have the best opportunities to "organize" something for ourselves.

I was put into the Galvanizing department. But we couldn't start working yet, for it turned out that all of us were full of lice. So we had to be put into quarantine for a short time. No Blue gas was available to exterminate them, so we had to stay in the camp. We were put to work there for the time being; only a few of us had to go to the factory to do clearing-up work. Of course the rest of us waited impatiently to hear what they would report back to us, for example what the factory looked like, whether they had received extra rations, and so on.

In the meantime our new "hosts", the sadists Hoffmann and Schuller, began to create "order". It began with the usual morning and evening roll calls. Once again, we had to stand around for hours. Special emphasis was put on us taking off our caps correctly and marching well. Our camp elder was a great specialist in all these matters, and he thought up some new torments for us besides. Before being deloused we received our new numbers. I received yet another new name: "**Prisoner No. 95522**".

Finally we were deloused and moved into our new barracks. The beds stood close together, always three high. Every person received a sack of straw and a

* [Ed.: David Kagan]

blanket. Initially the blanket distribution was very disorganized, and one often had to sleep without a blanket. Every barrack received its block elder with his rubber truncheon. First we had a Polish Jew, Ignatz, who was always using his rubber truncheon. After him came one of our own, who was milder. The block elder who ruled the second block was clearly a sadist: a German Jew named Salomon who made everyone feel his power. We trembled in fear of him, just as we trembled in fear of the camp elder. There were also some associates of the camp representative (Izke and others), who had also received directions from Kagan. The camp elder had a small room of his own in which he lived together with his younger brother, who was considerably more decent than he was, and the quartermaster Wilner, a very honorable and pious German Jew.

Workshops were set up once again. There was a small shoemaker's workshop, a tailoring shop and a barbershop. A special barber was appointed for the SS men; this was Fonarjow, who had already held this position in *Kaiserwald*. He often assured us that more than once he had wanted to slit his customers' throats. A carpentry workshop was also set up with the engineer Mischkinski as foreman. Mischkinski was one of Schuller's favorites. The internal work was done by a special work crew led by our comrade Nachke. This group (which included Dsemse, Zapp and others) received privileged treatment from the camp elder, and it was deployed wherever there was "easy work" and good opportunities to "organize" things. It also had a special corner in the barrack; there the members of the group ate together. Whenever we passed this table our mouths watered. All the members of this work crew were part of the camp's VIPs, and everyone was afraid of falling into "their hands".

We were allowed to use the sleeping barracks only for sleeping, and there was a special dining hall for meals. The tables were numbered and everyone had his assigned place. Every table had a table representative who received the food from the block elder and had to distribute it. The food was brought in buckets from the kitchen of the women's camp. The kitchen was headed by the SS man Drybe, who had carried out the large action to exterminate the Jews in Klooga, Estonia. All the signs in the dining hall and all the numbers in it had been painted by our comrade Joffe with my help.

The elder of Table No. 1 was the well-known Zionist activist Rosenthal. Then came the Czech table, where only Czech Jews sat and only Czech was spoken. As always, I was "lucky" with the number 13. My table was No. 13, and its elder was my comrade Njoma Kurin. Sometimes he took a bit more for himself, but in spite of our great hunger we overlooked this. Because a more educated group of people had clustered together at our table, the others called

us the "high-society table". If they were cursing us, they called us "the intelligent ones". The engineer Senitzki from Vilno sat opposite me. Besides my comrades Gustav Joffe, Jakob Zinnmann and Birkhahn, who later died of starvation, there were also other genuinely intelligent young men in my table group. Whenever the food was distributed, one had the best opportunity to observe every individual's character and degree of refinement. All of us were starving, and basically nobody could wait to sit down to eat. Of course no precisely equal distribution was possible. Outwardly self-controlled but inwardly baring our teeth in anticipation, we watched the bread until it was distributed. In order to be as fair as possible, we invented the following procedure. One of us had to stand with his back to the table and was then asked before each piece of bread was handed out: "Who gets this one?" Thus the distribution was entirely even-handed. After the bread had been distributed, a veritable exchange market was opened. One man would trade his bread for soup, another for margarine and so on. Or someone would buy a knife, a spoon, a needle or the like. The bread was measured out in centimeters as a means of exchange, so each of us always carried a small ruler. More than once, when a person urgently needed a small piece of shaving soap or something else, he would have to go without a whole meal in order to get it.

The bread was handed out every evening for all of the following day. That meant it had to be parceled out. I worked out a system for myself, which consisted of eating all the bread at once. Of course that meant I had to go hungry all the following day. Once I tried to eat the bread in two parts, but during the night I couldn't sleep until I had eaten up the bread I had saved. My comrade Joffe, who didn't approve of my system, resolved every evening to save a piece for later, but in the end he couldn't wait so long either and ate everything up. The only resolute man was Sienitzki: he always divided his bread ration into portions. He was also the only one in the Magdeburg concentration camp that I was really friends with, and when we separated after the liberation this parting was very emotional for me.

After meals, Joffe would often tell us about his world travels, and the entire political situation would also be discussed. In the final phase we had to rush through our dinner, because the Americans would "pay us a visit" regularly. The lights had to be put out beforehand. During my time there, the city of Magdeburg was heavily bombarded twice. From afar, we saw it burning for several days. Both the Americans and the English were very precise in their work. They dropped their bombs only a few meters from our concentration camp but left us entirely unscathed. We were actually convinced that our fac-

tory would also be destroyed one day, but it remained unscathed for our sake, not in order to further the Germans' interests. Right after the Russians occupied it they dismantled it and transported it to Soviet Russia.

II.

At last came the day when we had to go to work in the factory. Five abreast in a long row and surrounded by SS men, we marched through the gate of our camp to the factory. As we walked through the camp gate we were ordered, "Caps off!" We were counted and then we marched on. The large factory we came to was called Polte and consisted of many buildings. Besides the Jews, thousands of other prisoners had been put to work there. They worked in shifts, twenty-four hours a day. We too worked in two shifts: one week we had the night shift, the next week the day shift. During the shift changes, one heard all the languages of the world. The workers included an especially large number of Frenchmen and Belgians.

In peacetime the Polte factory had manufactured dishes and metal lamps, but now it had been entirely converted to weapons production. We Jews worked in a special department that produced cartridge cases. After they let us into the factory, our SS men remained standing in the doorway and supervised us from there. Sometimes some of them hung around in the factory to check whether we were working or not. There was also a factory police force that was supposed to prevent sabotage. They also stood at the factory entrance to check the workers' passes.

Because of its sheer size, our department made a tremendous impression on us. Those of us who had been assigned to the "Galvanik" department were led into a special section. The foreman examined all of us, inquired about our previous occupations, and then assigned everyone his job. Finally he explained to each individual what he had to do, for everything was done in the manner of a conveyor belt. He appointed me section chief and assigned to me the duty of always making sure my comrades had the equipment they needed, besides doing my own job. Depending on their respective jobs, one worker might receive white silk gloves, another rubber gloves, and still another rubber boots and a rubber apron.

It was still cold in the factory. The machines were standing still, and only after every worker was at his place did the foreman press an electric button that immediately set the giant machines into motion. The very same thing was happening in the other departments too. The large factory hall was now full of the noise of the machines and the rattle of small electric wagons that constantly

drove back and forth. I was assigned to install insulation. The work itself was not difficult, but it was unpleasant because even at times when I didn't want to work I couldn't take a break, since it was the machine that set the pace. It took us weeks to get more or less used to the work. Often the machine didn't work for hours at a time because of some mistake we had made. The foremen sweated to put everything in order again. Then, crash! – and once again the machine was standing still.

The only really fortunate thing about the Galvanik was that there it was nice and warm, and we also had the opportunity to wash with hot water. Because washing powder was available to us, we could also wash our clothes. Now I had a new "occupation" for my free time: being my comrades' "laundryman". Once when doing the laundry, I had a stroke of very bad luck. Engineer Lein's shirt dissolved completely in the washing kettle because I had used too much bleach. Since I was of course unable to replace it, the poor man had to walk around without a shirt for a long time.

Other people who also wanted to earn a bit of bread (measured out in centimeters) turned to other occupations that were also in demand. For example, one could "organize" some steel or tin and use it to make knives or margarine containers. Brooches and other pieces of jewelry for our women were fashioned out of galalith. Schapiro was a specialist at this. Most of the customers for these things were our VIPs, who then paid for them with the food they had kept from us. Out of the rags we received to clean the machines with, we made bags for our rations and patches for our clothes and underwear. The women (such as Mrs. Löwstein and others) magically produced veritable "designer models" from these rags. It was not at all uncommon to come across a woman who was wearing a nice blouse or something similar under her prisoner's uniform. Everyone would give up his last piece of bread in order to own a sewing needle; we made thread out of the cotton we were given to clean the machines with. Comrade Dreier was regarded as an especially talented artist, because he managed to produce sock-like creations for us. In short, every free minute at the factory was spent either sewing or washing.

The prisoners from other departments came to our rooms in the "Galvanik" department to wash themselves. Comrade Atlas was a regular guest. We had two foremen. The older one, who wore Nazi insignia, soon became quite soft after he fell in love with a young Hungarian Jewish woman. The second one, a hot-tempered German, became ever more unbearable as the collapse of the German forces progressed. Once he slapped me too. I did not keep my position as section chief for long, for it was handed over to my comrade Sienitzki.

The people became more and more familiar with the factory work, and I was quite proud and happy about the skills and abilities of my coreligionists. Hard-working women and men attended the large precision machines. Those who had been recruited in Stutthof as shoemakers, tailors and so on – all of them now stood at the large combined machines. I must emphasize that the women from Vilno were the best workers.

The specialists among us included engineers, electricians and mechanics. The factory's head engineer relied heavily on our engineer Segall. This head engineer was an extremely evil man. Wearing his green coat with its party insignia, he was constantly strolling through the large factory hall and letting us feel his power. The Jews who attended the furnaces had to work the hardest. They scarcely had enough air to breathe, and so they could not work very long at a time. We also had victims to mourn because of our work. Some of the young men lost fingers (H. Kussmann, Gurwitsch), and a young woman from Vilno even lost a hand. As a "reward" for this they transported her later to the main part of the Buchenwald concentration camp, intending to send her "through the oven". But her life was saved by chance.

Sunday was our day of rest. Only sometimes did individual work crews go to do clean-up work. We ourselves greatly preferred to go to work, for in the camp under the supervision of our tyrants we were even worse off.

Besides our work in the factory, we had another and more important kind of work. It consisted of (1) "organizing" something to eat for ourselves, and (2) processing the raw materials we had "organized" in the factory, by producing a knife, a brooch or some other useful object. Filching food was a particularly difficult and dangerous enterprise. The best place for it was in the Aryans' kitchens. There they dumped all the food that was left on the plates into buckets. These buckets were then put outside to be picked up so that their contents could be used to feed the pigs. This was our main field of action. However, one had to be an accomplished acrobat in order to sneak through a window or a door unnoticed by the SS men. Only in this way was it possible to dip a bowl of soup out of the buckets. Getting potato peelings was even more complicated. It was considered a special stroke of luck if one sometimes found pieces of beet. I too once managed to reach the garbage dump and get some potato peelings. Of course there were veritable "professionals" for all these activities. A couple of Polish Jews were the best in this field. But our young men (Ch. Schabel, Robert Chait, Kaliko, Padowitsch) were almost as good. Many paid for their recklessness with heavy beatings and confinement in the detention cell, but even this made no difference to them.

Lunch was brought to us once a day in large pails from the camp to the factory. It consisted of a bowl of thin soup, and a person was lucky if he found a potato in it. Our VIPs made sure they had fished all the good pieces out of the soup before it got to us. We were furious, but we could do nothing at all about it. Once, when I ventured to say something about it anyway, I was immediately slapped in the face. It was lunch that made people really hungry. Exactly the same thing was happening to the women. They had their Ljuba (the leader of the work crew) and another VIP, who "took care" of them in the same way.

The meeting point where we could talk about all this was the toilet. But even this "pleasure" had its limits. At first one could go out only for a certain length of time, but later on it was only at a fixed time.

For us the air raids were a great relief. In the beginning, they were unfortunately rare, but toward the end they became more and more frequent, several times a day. With the greatest joy we ran, together with the Aryans, into the air raid shelters, which had a space specially divided off for the Jews. When we heard the preliminary alarm we got ready to go, and we were always bitterly disappointed if it was not followed by a real one. During the air raids the whole factory suddenly looked deserted. We heard only the noise of thousands of planes and the bomb explosions. As we sat in the long, narrow, dark cellars, this noise was music to our ears. The young people from Vilno and the women gladdened us with newly composed and very interesting sad songs. When the "all clear" signal came, we had to return to the factory at once. After twelve hours of work we returned to the camp. The next shift was coming. On the way, in the large hall, we met the others and exchanged a few words. Then we walked on. As always, we marched in rows five abreast: "One, two, three, left and left" was the command. Sometimes a person would be thinking of something else and would march out of step. Woe to him if a column leader noticed, for then there would be an immediate beating. We marched and our wooden shoes clattered. The closer we came to the camp gate, the straighter became our posture, so that the murderers Hoffmann and Schuller would be satisfied. Unfortunately, they were not always satisfied. Then we had to march for hours as a punishment, and we were also sent to our camp elder for "direct treatment".

"Caps off!" We marched into the Magdeburg satellite camp of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Once again we were counted, and then we lined up in the roll call square in front of our barrack. If we came from a day shift we had to wait for the roll call; if we came from a night shift we went directly to bed. The women marched on to their women's camp.

III.

A new transport of Hungarian Jews, women and men, arrived in our camp from Buchenwald. Although they were not the least bit nationalistic in their attitude, they were Jews all the same. In terms of their outward appearance they made a very good impression. This group included excellent professional people, and the women were young and pretty. They weren't keen on making contact with us, for we didn't appeal to them in the least. The camp elder immediately got to work on them, using his methods to "make human beings of them". The only thing they could do to his satisfaction was to march. They had been officers and soldiers, and they knew how to do it because of their army days. In a marching competition they won the first prize.

We used Sundays, when we didn't have to go to work, to clear up. Now and then the camp elder made sure we "got some fresh air" by chasing us outside to march in the cold without our coats on. We spent our free time in our "dining room". We mended our clothes and waited to be ordered to go to work again. Schuller would always appear very suddenly. What angered him the most on his visits was when he found one of us wearing a scarf around his neck. That person would immediately receive a real beating.

On Sundays we also visited our comrades in other barracks, for often we hadn't seen them all week on account of the day and night shifts. On one of these visits I met a certain Mr. Schäftel, a teacher from Vilno, and over time I became quite friendly with him. He was a very gifted human being and, most importantly, had a broad political perspective. His optimism was as great as mine, and both of us firmly believed we would eventually be liberated. On the great Jewish holiday of Purim he held an excellent lecture in his block. The meaning of Purim gave him a great deal of material to compare with our life at that time. His listeners were gripped by his talk. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, because I was working elsewhere.

Also living in this block were Dubin's son and his secretary Golowtschiner. Both of them looked ghastly. They were still observing the kosher regulations and thus were hardly able to eat a thing. Golowtschiner soon collapsed from weakness, so he requested a work assignment inside the camp. When the camp elder offered him a position that involved using a rubber truncheon, he refused it. He lasted only a short time doing factory work and soon died of starvation. Young Dubin often visited me in his free time to pour out his heart to me. He regarded me as a genuine native of Riga and was still convinced that his father was living in Soviet Russia. Also lodged in the same block were the artists

Godes and Schalit. Their health condition was especially bad. In a quiet corner of this barrack one could also find the prominent Riga painter Rudi. He generally worked on drawings ordered by people who paid for them in bread.

Because we almost never had a real day of rest on Sundays, we waited for the next morning and our factory work with impatience.

The day began at four in the morning. Within a few minutes we had to be on our feet and make our beds army-style. For a long time I slept next to my comrade Joffe to warm myself, but he needed more space, so he found himself a better sleeping place on the second level. Now came the order: "Get coffee!" A different group was appointed every week to do this job. The coffee had to be fetched from the kitchen of the women's camp, where only women worked, including a couple of Jewish women. One day this job was assigned to me. I still remember exactly: it was the morning of 1 January 1945. The personnel, including the guards, were still in a New Year's Eve mood. I immediately took advantage of this unique opportunity, and out of a pail of leavings from the previous evening's holiday feast I took as much goose goulash as I could stash away. Because I was totally unprepared for this "find", I had to put everything I managed to grab into my pockets and my cap. I reached our barrack successfully with this precious booty. I gave my comrades some of it, ate my fill, and still had some left over to trade with. Of course I had customers from the best social circles for these goods, so I had enough food for myself that whole week.

Once a similar coincidence occurred in the factory, and it helped me a great deal. A foreman from another department, who assumed I was a doctor, asked me to translate a letter for him. I took the letter with me to the camp and asked a friend of mine who was a genuine doctor to translate it. It was a letter in German containing Latin medical terms. The foreman wanted to receive the treatment described in the letter so that he would be exempted from military service. He was very satisfied with my performance and told me later that the letter had saved him. To reward me, he gave me between five and ten potatoes a day for several weeks. Cooking them in the factory was by no means easy, but we found a way to do even this. Cooking potatoes in the camp was also very difficult. There was only a single small iron stove in the washroom. To get permission to use it, we had to pay a percentage of our potatoes to the room elder there. The stolen potato peelings were also cooked, and we made a "*tsimmes*", dish of carrots. Every one of us suffered from stomach aches.

One Sunday I was supposed to fetch our lunch together with a group of other men. We were standing next to the kitchen and waiting for the pails. At this

moment a large cartload of sugar beets arrived. A colleague and I decided immediately to organize a couple of sugar beets for ourselves. My comrade Zalelsohn reached the cart, took a few for himself and got back safely. But I had lost time because I hesitated for a moment, and I was discovered by Hoffmann just as he was coming out. He took me with him into a small outer office, ordered me to take off my glasses, and gave me a bad beating with his rubber truncheon. He hit me so hard in the face and head that I felt I wouldn't get out of there alive. Finally I had to carry a pail of food to the barrack all by myself. How I managed to do this is still a riddle to me. For a long time I went around with my head completely swollen.

At other times this sadist would beat us on our naked buttocks for every small infraction. We would have to count the strokes of our punishment ourselves, and if we tried to skip a count he would start again at the beginning. Another punishment was to be locked up in a dark, cold bunker without food. In addition to all these torments we also felt the heavy hand of our camp elder. The first victim was a young fellow from Vienna who was beaten to death.

By now most of us were mere skeletons. We were absolutely exhausted, morally, physically and emotionally. We clung to various news items that seemed positive. Now and then Gottlieb the watchmaker managed to hear something new on the radio, and his brother sometimes got a newspaper from an Aryan in the factory. Afterward we would discuss the latest news in great detail. I was convinced, especially toward the end, that our liberation was bound to come. And I talked about this with all my comrades. I always led the way with my optimism!

IV.

An infirmary was set up for the sick and the weak. It was headed by the nose, ear and throat specialist Dr. Jakobsohn, assisted by Dr. Wolpert from Riga. Because Dr. Jakobsohn did not get along with Dr. Wolpert, he replaced him with Dr. Jaworkowsky Jr. The latter had a great deal of understanding for us and helped us whenever he could. There was also a dental clinic, which was headed by the dentist Kahn from Riga. He had hardly any instruments at first, but over time he received the essentials. Before the dental clinic was set up, the Buchenwald concentration camp had sent us an Aryan prisoner who was allegedly a dentist, to "soothe" our toothaches. His entire battery of instruments consisted of one set of pliers for tooth extraction, and his sole manner of treatment was to pull teeth. He "treated" even people with sound teeth by extracting their gold teeth. Because of our state of half-starvation, the heavy la-

bor and the beatings, the infirmary was always full of sick people. During the final months our bodies were so racked by starvation that nearly all of us had swellings, some on the face, others on the feet. Many also died because of the constant lack of food, for example Golowtschiner, my tablemate Birkhahn, A. Tukazir and others. At this point permission was given to set up a special block for recuperation. I will tell more about it later.

V.

In the women's camp, which lay behind ours, the women were housed in barracks just as we were. The sanitation conditions there were much worse than ours. In particular, the condition of the latrines beggared all description. For this purpose there was only an open pit beside the barracks, into which one could fall easily. The regulations and working conditions also matched ours. Outside the factory we had no contact of any kind with the women. The only intermediary was the little boy Sima, who was allowed to run back and forth between the two camps. Later on he had to act as a messenger boy for the camp elder for a short time, and after that he went with us to the factory for several weeks. There he stayed in what was called the women's kitchen.

From day to day we could see how quickly even the prettiest women lost their beauty. The women experienced some accidents in the factory too. One day scabies broke out in the women's camp (among the Aryan women as well). The doctors there were at their wits' end and came to Dr. Jakobsohn for help. Fortunately, this epidemic did not last long; if it had, they would certainly have been sent to Buchenwald to be gassed.*

On orders of the concentration camp's central administration, a tuberculosis examination was carried out. All of the women, Aryan and Jewish, were examined. Extraordinarily high numbers of cases were found in both groups. These sick women were then put into a group that was sent to Buchenwald to be gassed.** It included the woman from Vilno who had lost her hand in a factory accident, as well as our young comrade Sirotinski, because he was too sick to work. The woman survived by a lucky chance, but our comrade was killed.

One morning as we came into the factory to relieve the night shift, the women who had worked that night weren't there. We were very agitated.

* [Ed.: There was no gas chamber in Buchenwald; very sick prisoners, who went to the sick bay, were most of the time given lethal injections.]

** [Ibid.]

Later we found out the reason: the whole work crew had been taken back to the camp that night. Understandably, the women were thrown into a huge panic. All the women in the barracks also had to come out. All of them were ordered to line up around a square, in the middle of which stood a gallows. Not long afterward, a closed car drove up. Out of it stepped the executioner, wearing a top hat, patent-leather shoes and white gloves. The SS girls brought out a Ukrainian girl who was already half-dead. The main overseer held a short lecture. She declared that this girl had been condemned to die because of sabotage. The same thing would happen to any of them if they took even the slightest liberty. Then the poor woman was killed very quickly. Afterwards, all of them without exception had to march past the corpse. Anyone who didn't was beaten. People said the "sabotage" had taken place as follows: one of the factory foremen had tried to molest her and she had slapped his face in public. People also said that after the liberation this foreman had immediately been arrested by the Jews. His subsequent fate is unknown.

VI.

At the beginning of 1945 the factory was no longer operating at full capacity. The scarcity of raw materials was having its effect. There were days on which we only had to work for a few hours. But of course both the management and the foremen had the greatest interest in keeping the factory in operation. They knew very well that if the factory closed they would be drafted into the army. They found a solution by lending some of us Jewish workers to the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). Our new occupation consisted of hauling material out of the bombed houses that could be used to build fortifications against the enemy. The factory management had to negotiate with the NSDAP for a fairly long time about our deployment, as the party officials were unwilling to send us to work in the town.

We men marched out of the gates of Polte for the first time. Not long after we had left the camp we could already see the first ruins. Under heavy guard we marched through the once-beautiful town of Magdeburg. We went through the center of town, past the main railroad station, and saw not a single house that was whole, only rubble. Huge apartment buildings had collapsed like houses of cards. Only a few people were out on the streets. The guards drove us toward the Hindenburg Bridge, which we had to fortify against the enemy. There was one thing we could not understand at all: Magdeburg, which lay in the heart of Germany, had to be protected from the enemy already? "Comrades," I called out, "it makes sense, it's all clear to me now!" We have a say-

ing: "When the bell rings, the work's over!" I had overheard a German saying quite openly that the Russian army's vanguards had broken through and were now only a few hundred kilometers from Magdeburg. I kept it to myself, for after I had told a comrade he had simply laughed at me. So I told them to work "hard" - after all, we had to win the war!

When I worked on fortifications, I was always lucky. It was that way in Riga too: the enemy bypassed the city and my fortifications stood firm. I hoped the same thing would happen again in Magdeburg. And indeed, I was lucky once more. The Americans made a detour around the town, and our months of work were all in vain. We had to fortify not only the bridges but also the access roads. For this purpose, heavy steel beams were dragged out of the bombed houses. Once as we were working in the wrecked houses we "strolled" through a hole in a cellar in hopes of "organizing" something there. We found a tremendous amount of loot, for the Germans had stored huge amounts of food in their cellars. There were some excellent items: puddings and first-class drinks. Everything had to be eaten as fast as possible. The only thing we could take with us was potatoes. Sometimes we found potatoes already roasted by the conflagration. But it was dangerous to take even potatoes back into the camp. Our murderers in the camp had heard about it, and when we returned they searched us thoroughly and gave us a terrible beating. Some of us will not forget how often we bled for those potatoes. "Strolling around" in the bombed-out cellars meant death in any case, for signs hung everywhere to the effect that looting was punishable by death. So we were risking our lives to get something to eat. One great advantage of our new work was that at the NSDAP work detail we received an extra bowl of soup at midday. In a word, it was worth the effort.

Because some sections of the factory were still operating, not all of us could get into a work crew in the town. In any case, the situation at the camp eased significantly, and everyone tried hard to get into the fortification work crews. Besides the crew working on the Hindenburg Bridge, which we called "the long tour", there was also a second work crew, "the short tour", which worked on the Hitler Bridge. We went to work in the town without tools. Only on the way there, in the courtyard of NSDAP headquarters, were shovels and other tools handed out to us, and we had to give them back when we returned. Shouldering our tools like weapons, we marched through the town singing. We sang Soviet songs in Russian. In our group, the song "*Bej wintowka, po golowkie bezposzczadno po wragu*" (Shoot mercilessly with your rifle at your enemy's head) and the well-known song "*Katjuscha*" were great hits. But the

SS people soon found out what the texts of the songs meant and forbade us to sing them. The townspeople, and the displaced Russian civilians even more so, watched us in astonishment. The Hungarian Jews, who marched in even better military formation than we did, also sang their Hungarian songs. Later on, many women also came to work in the town; they had to carry bricks and dig trenches. For us the work was a great relief, not only because we got better food but especially because we could now form a rough picture of Germany's situation - after seeing all the ruins, being flown over by thousands of airplanes every day, and hearing the reports of the OKW or *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (German army headquarters). We knew that the destruction of Magdeburg had lasted only 55 minutes. Initially we were accompanied only by the SS guards. Their leader was *Oberscharführer* Hochwarg. Later they were replaced by the *Volkssturm* (teenage boys recruited during the last days of the war). Among the latter there were also many who beat us.

VII.

During the final week before our "temporary liberation" we received one more new transport of Polish Jews. They were sent to do special clearing-up work and were not part of the factory's work crews. They lived in a separate barrack under very bad conditions and were already totally exhausted because of the long time they had been prisoners (since 1939). They were assigned to do a very good kind of work, where one could organize a great deal. At their work station they found a large *maline* (hiding place) full of barrels of stinking old herring salad, which they sold to us like hot cakes. They also got their hands on mocha chocolate beans. The trade flourished, and in order to get some herring salad we parted from our last pieces of bread. These Jews too had to line up at the usual roll calls. It was very lucky for them that our camp elder was not in charge of them. Before they were assigned to their work, they were subjected to the usual delousing process in our washrooms under very harsh conditions.

Although some things eased up for us because we were in the town work crew, our ranks continued to thin out. Many people went to the infirmary and died there. The number of people with edemas due to starvation (swollen faces, legs, etc.) kept increasing, and so it was decided to set up a recovery block. I was there too. Initially I wasn't accepted, because the recovery block was overfilled. The recovery consisted of receiving a small amount of medical treatment and not having to go to work. While I was in the recovery block I became certain that something would happen - that is, that the end was com-

ing. The Americans were getting more "impudent" every day in their bombing work and paying us their visits several times a day. Finally even the large cold storage depots of Magdeburg, which were located only a few hundred steps from us, were bombed. This caused tremendous damage. Because I did not want to be classified as "unable to work" any longer, I decided to return to the camp despite my weakened condition.

The next day – it was 11 April 1945 – we were sent to another place. We were ordered to dig protective trenches behind the town. Besides us, Aryan inmates from the prisons were also working there. On the way, we noticed that armored cars had been stationed on the corners in preparation for street fighting. We now assumed that our liberators were very close to the town. But we didn't know anything more detailed than that. After finishing our work we went back toward the camp. In the meantime, the armored cars had been parked across the streets so as to block them. Our SS leaders no longer knew what to do and led us up toward the cemetery. There they quarreled about whether we should stay there or return to the camp. Finally they decided: "Back to the camp!" On the way we met our murderers Hoffmann and Schuller. They had all their luggage with them, and Jews were being forced to pull it for them in a wagon. When the SS guards saw Hoffmann and Schuller, they left us standing there and ran away. We threw our tools down on the street and were free! We stood there paralyzed and couldn't grasp it at all.

I decided not to return to the camp and spent the night with two comrades in a woodshed in the town. I didn't go back to the camp until the next morning. On the way there, the civilian population was already giving us bread. In the camp a great celebration was going on. All the gates stood open and everyone was walking around freely. The Hungarian and Polish Jews had already disappeared. All the food supplies had been plundered. In our barrack I was treated to a holiday banquet. My comrade Senitzki and I found new sleeping quarters for ourselves in the SS barrack. Because of a heavy bombardment by the Americans, which we had always wished for, we spent a sleepless night. Early the next morning an armed group of *Volkssturm* recruits appeared and ordered us to line up. Many of us fled immediately and disappeared; many others had stayed in the town and hidden in the ruins. We were put into a column together with many women, and under heavy guard we were led out of the town and across the Elbe. The dream of freedom had been brief, and we were prisoners again!

One of the SS men, an *Oberscharführer* from Vienna named Mauser, had put on a prisoners' uniform. He was seized and shot on the spot. We marched

for a long time in an unknown direction. We noticed that the Germans were preparing to resist and fortifying the access roads to the bridges. After several hours of marching we stopped at a tennis court to rest. The women were separated from the men. Two large trucks full of the weak and the sick, including Dubin's son, also arrived. I was standing next to a certain Oscar Fain. Fortunately, I left this spot to gather kindling. At that moment the English and the Americans flew over us and bombarded us heavily. Shots hailed down from all directions. There was screaming and weeping everywhere. Our guards disappeared, and the place was full of victims. Fain and the very popular Dr. May had been smashed to pieces. Many women had also been wounded. My comrade Mrs. Betty Segal lay on the ground screaming, her foot shattered. I was so disoriented that I couldn't give her any help. A long time later I still suffered from remorse, and I couldn't free myself of it until I had heard that Mrs. Segal was well again.

We left about thirty to forty dead and wounded comrades behind on the tennis court. It looked just like a battlefield. The rest of us were gathered together anew and forced to march on. From town to town, we were handed over to new *Volkssturm* recruits, and nobody actually knew what our destination was. En route, my comrades Scheftel and Senitzki also disappeared, which I regretted very much. The trucks for the weak and the sick were commanded by the former physician Hirschowitzsch from Estonia. I too was put into one of these transports. As we were driving down a broad avenue the English bombarded us, and even a large white flag did not save us. Once again, I survived by pure chance. We had eight victims in our group. At last we reached a railroad station, where the *Volkssturm* recruits handed us over to SS people. The next morning we made a detour around Berlin and arrived at the Oranienburg station.

The "Sachsenhausen" Concentration Camp (Oranienburg)

Oranienburg is the main station of Sachsenhausen. On the morning we arrived we immediately received a visit from the English bomber pilots; it was clear that they were growing more and more impudent. They flew quite low and attacked the arriving passenger trains with machine guns that could be seen with the naked eye. Our transport was not spared. We ran in all directions into the open fields, and so did our "brave heroes", the SS guards. Some of us used the opportunity to make their way back to the town and hide there. When it grew

quieter, the rest of us gathered together again in our freight cars and traveled a short distance further to Sachsenhausen. Here we stood for a long time. The men were ordered to leave the train and the women stayed inside. We waited until a large group of women from Sachsenhausen arrived at the station. They took the places we had vacated in the train, which was to go on to the Ravensburg concentration camp. The newly arrived women met a great many acquaintances and even relatives among the women who had arrived with us. The joy of reunion was very moving; there were tears and kisses. These were women from Lodz, and all of them had passed through the Auschwitz camp.

Guarded by SS men, we now marched on to our new lodgings. On the way we noticed many beautiful houses, veritable palaces, in which the murderers of Sachsenhausen were residing together with their families. We now came to a large gate reminiscent of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. That is where the Sachsenhausen concentration camp began. At the gate there was a small registration room, and in the middle of it stood a cocked machine gun. Sachsenhausen made a tremendous impression on us. It was one of the largest camps in Germany and had the same status as Dachau and Buchenwald. There were huge barracks everywhere, and "the big oven" dominated the whole picture from afar. In my time the camp housed 32,000 people. There were only a few Jews among them, and the Jews tried as best they could to conceal their race.

We marched into a semicircular square. There were huge printed announcements everywhere. Some of them have stayed in my memory: "Work liberates! Its milestones are: work, diligence, discipline, obedience, love of the fatherland, the joy of self-sacrifice" and so on. We were registered and received new prisoners' numbers. My number, which also became my last name, was: Prisoner No. 124529. As usual, we were led to the delousing station and received different striped rags. Everything was done in great haste and, for the first time, quietly. We could see that the administrators were very nervous. We were led into a special barrack that was completely enclosed around and above in wire netting. It was like being in a huge chicken coop. Inside there was nothing to sit or sleep on. We sat on the floor and hung around all day in the narrow courtyard, into which a few sunbeams fell. We were not allowed to leave this cage, so we were in a locked prison. Nobody took care of us. Nobody thought of feeding us at all. We heard that we would not be sent to work for the time being. Up to that time the prisoners had mainly been sent to work in the large Heinkel airplane factory nearby. At the factory there was a special barrack with its own set of guards. Its inmates were never allowed to come out and were already destined for eternity. It turned out that this barrack contained

a small printing workshop. The Germans were trying to "defeat" the English by producing colossal amounts of counterfeit English banknotes there so that they could cause a devaluation of the English currency.

In the evenings there was the usual roll call. We stood lined up in our small, narrow courtyard. There was no supper, so we had to go to bed hungry. It was 18 April 1945, my birthday. My life passed before me like a dream; painfully, I thought of my whole family and regretted that I was still alive at all, that I alone had survived and had not shared my relatives' fate.

We sat down on the floor of our barrack, so close together that if you wanted to go outside in the dark it was impossible to find a way out. There was not enough room for everyone, but the crafty guards found a solution. Large, long tables were brought in, and one group would sleep on top of them while another group lay underneath. These were the clever inventions of trained sadists. Every day new people were brought to join us. The only place left to put them was the courtyard. Fortunately, it was already getting warmer. The following evening we received our first rations, which meant we hadn't had anything to eat for nearly two days. We were very weak, dragging our feet as we walked.

On the third day there were more new arrivals. This made us suspect that our liberators were very close by. By then I was no longer interested in anything; all I wanted was to eat. That night, planes dropped a number of bombs near the camp. They spared us again, for they knew that here tens of thousands of people were waiting to be liberated. At four in the morning a general restlessness became evident in the entire camp. A German SS man who knew Polish came to us. He announced, "The camp will be evacuated in an unspecified direction; rows must be formed five abreast, a thousand men to a column; food for four days will be handed out. Everyone must take his place in a column according to his nationality. Those who are sick or believe they won't survive a long march can stay here. They will be collected and taken away later on."

What to do? I was weak but I didn't want to stay with the sick people under any circumstances, for they would certainly be "taken care of". I decided to muster up the last of my strength and go along. Next I had to think about which column I ought to join. It seemed dangerous to go with the Jews, for they would certainly share the fate of the sick. Since I spoke Polish, I thought the best course for me would be to join the Polish column. So, together with a few other Jewish comrades, I smuggled myself into their ranks. The Poles noticed this and tried to throw me out. I explained in the purest Polish that I was

half-Polish, which reassured them. We heard screams and shots in the distance. The clothing depots and all the workshops were being looted. Thick smoke was pouring out of the chimneys of the office rooms.

Now it was our column's turn, and we marched out of the camp. Before we did so, each person received a whole loaf of bread and a piece of Tilsit cheese. We were happy, overjoyed. A whole loaf of bread! How long it had been since we had held a whole loaf of bread in our hands! I had wished for this for years!

Thus we left the cruel concentration camp that is known to the world as
Sachsenhausen.

We marched on...

The Road to Freedom (The Liberation)

We marched out through the great gate of the Sachsenhausen camp. Many SS men in uniform who had been assigned to the individual marching columns were already waiting for us on the other side. One column after another began to move. They traveled along a great variety of routes but all of them had the same destination: Rostock. I no longer thought about anything at all. I only held my loaf of bread, which was my food ration for four days, in my trembling hands and gradually I began to eat it. Because of my raging hunger I couldn't stand to wait any longer, and it was impossible for me to save these provisions for later. I had to strengthen myself in order to survive; if I hadn't, I would have simply fallen over. I marched and I ate, looking neither left nor right. Slowly my strength seemed to return, and I felt that perhaps I would make it after all. We knew nothing about recent political events, but we realized clearly that the situation was very tense. The SS divisions forced us to march between fifteen and twenty kilometers a day; time seemed precious.

In the mornings it was still cold, but by noon it became warmer, sometimes even hot. We threw away all the blankets and similar things we had with us, to lighten our loads. The whole road was already covered with the things discarded by the columns marching ahead of us. I replaced a few of my things with other ones and wound a towel around my head. On the way we met comrades who had collapsed. They were lying in the roadside ditches and waiting to be picked up. Many of them had already died.

During the day there were several breaks. Fires were made, and those who had organized potatoes for themselves tried to roast them. It was by no means easy to light a fire, for we hardly knew where we should get the wood for it. Most people teamed up in groups to cook their potatoes. In the evening we were forced into a barn, or we stayed in the open fields. The earth was damp, and so were our striped clothes. People tried to warm themselves against each other. In the effort, many fell asleep forever, and our guards' attempts to wake them with truncheons and gunshots were in vain. They were asleep forever, and nobody saw to it that they were buried. Because the whole road was covered with people in striped uniforms, we called our march the "March of the Dead". One died sooner, the other later, and hardly anyone was able to survive. The rations provided by the SS were very meager: two or three potatoes a day. They gave us nothing more. Sometimes we saw whole mountains of sugar beets and potatoes in the fields, but the SS men did not allow us to go near them. Every expedition toward them resulted in some of us being killed. But punishment meant little to us, for we knew we had to die one way or another.

Once on this march we came upon a dead horse. The people marching ahead of us had already torn out large chunks of flesh. We didn't rest till we had organized the remains for ourselves, whatever the cost. We cut all of it into small pieces, roasted them over a fire, and thus had an unhoped-for meal of meat.

Several days later we marched into a large forest. We were ordered to stay there. All the columns, consisting of thousands of people, gathered together, and we lay down on the ground to sleep. During the night the women's divisions arrived from Sachsenhausen, and they were ordered to sleep in another part of the forest. The forest was completely international. We heard a great variety of languages, and every nationality slept in its own section. We broke twigs from the trees to make fires. This had also been forbidden by the murderers. There was no talk of food; we got nothing at all to eat. Water was a further problem. Expeditions were sent to a nearby stream to fetch water. Undescribable scenes took place. Many people found their death in this stream. We heard shooting from all directions. Our "protectors" would shoot whenever they saw a prisoner too close to the fence.

For three days we sat in this forest in despair, with no food. We prepared to die of starvation. But then one evening we saw the arrival of a Red Cross truck with "Canada" written on it. How could a Canadian Red Cross truck have gotten there? We were absolutely astonished! But it vanished just as unexpectedly

as it had come. Less than an hour later a whole column of Red Cross trucks arrived. We were very excited, for we didn't know what was going on. We were told that the Americans had heard about us and were sending us food. How they could do this in the middle of Germany was a riddle to us, but without their help we would surely have died. We were happy not only about the packages but also about the fact that people cared about our fate, that we were no longer alone. Until then we hadn't known what they would do with the Jews and whether there was a plan to save us too. But the Americans made no exceptions, so each of us got a package. They distributed the packages themselves, for they didn't trust the SS people. And for our part, we made sure the SS people got nothing.

We opened our presents, and I couldn't believe my eyes. Everything was there, from chocolate and various canned goods to dried milk powder. But the thing we were most interested in, bread, was missing; there were only some cookies. I hadn't seen such delicious things for years, and for years I hadn't felt so satisfied. Once again I was ahead of the others with my optimism. No, we would surely survive! I lay there all night chewing and, unlike my comrades, once again I saved nothing for later.

In the meantime some Red Cross ambulances had also arrived, and they gathered up the weak people. On my shoulders I carried my comrade Stameskin from Riga, who was in a very bad condition, to the place for the sick people. In the forest I met the notorious murderer and prisoner from the Kaiserwald concentration camp in Riga, Bolek, who had killed the Riga police chief Haar and murdered various people in the recuperation block (Block No. 2). There I also saw our tormentors from Magdeburg, the sadists Hoffmann and Schuller, again. They were always together. Even the Viennese *Scharführer* of the "long tour" work crew in Magdeburg turned up.

Suddenly an order was given: Everyone line up as before in closed columns for the onward march! Wrapped in my rags, with a scarf and a blanket on my head, I dragged myself forward. I looked like a real Moslem. We passed villages and small towns. There was panic and destruction everywhere. We were told that the inhabitants were running toward the Americans; people were also saying that the Russians were already pressing on Berlin. In the forest we even saw the evacuated Berlin Fire Department with all its equipment. Everything was moving in blind confusion. A column of Russians wearing German SS uniforms also marched past us. These were the notorious traitors, the *wlasowcy*. They offered us cigarettes but we didn't accept them, for we wanted

nothing to do with them. Members of the *Hitlerjugend* were also on the road, for everyone was afraid of the Russians.

Already we had nearly forgotten the good times. Hunger tormented us anew. We got nothing at all from "our hosts". We were living on nothing but the few potatoes we managed to scavenge. People were dropping like flies. Many decided to escape. Further along the march we again received food packages from the Americans, but this time it was only one package for every four people. It was hard to distribute the food among starving people. One person would receive the package and three others would run after him. He would disappear into the crowd, and so the others would get no food. There was screaming and moaning everywhere!

The SS men were very nervous and would reach for their weapons on the least pretext. At night they chased our column into a stable. It was dark and there wasn't enough room for everyone. Together with my comrade Chait I stayed in the courtyard. The SS people decided that we were trying to escape. Chait disappeared as fast as he could into the stable. The SS men grabbed me, dragged me off to the side, and were about to get rid of me. My explanations that I had stayed outside only because there was no room inside did not help me at all. They beat me horribly and put me against the wall to be shot. I felt the final minutes of my life approaching. The night was splendid, the moon was shining with especial beauty, and it was infinitely difficult for me to part from all of it. The SS man shot over my head, whether intentionally or not I didn't know. In any case, he asked me where my comrade was. By then he was lying inside near the entrance. I pretended I was going to look for him in the stable and disappeared into the crowd. And so that incident ended.

The next morning we had to march on. We passed a large airfield where a great many damaged German planes were standing. The German soldiers on the airfield obviously had no commanding officers, for people were wandering around in all directions. My comrades threw themselves into the roadside ditch to escape. In the evening we reached a small wood on a peninsula and prepared to sleep there. Here there was water and wood. We made fires, but the wind and the cold kept us from sleeping. The ground was damp and we had nothing to lie on. I was already totally exhausted, and I decided to end this torture the next day, come what may.

In the morning we marched on. We reached the town of Parchim. There we received, for the first time in a long time, some hot coffee from the kettles of the *Wehrmacht*. The civilian population threw us rotten potatoes to eat. Like everyone else, I flung myself on the potatoes and fell directly into one of these

piles of potatoes. Because they were totally rotten and by then were nothing but stinking mush, I got myself completely filthy and gained nothing. The SS men beat us with their rifle butts to get us into line again. Then we marched on.

This was on 1 May 1945. The sun was shining beautifully. Suddenly a truck full of Russian prisoners came into view and drove slowly past. I greeted them and congratulated them on the international holiday. I could scarcely walk. So I lagged behind till I was the last one in our row and then I threw myself into the roadside ditch. The *Scharführer* came up to me, gave me a kick, and assumed I was already dead, so he left me lying there.

When the column had disappeared, I crept out and crawled into a nearby wood. Was I really free? I was still surrounded by enemies. I went deeper into the wood in order to rest a little, but I couldn't sleep, for the thought of my liberty gave me no rest. In the distance I heard voices and saw a fire. Next to it stood three young men; they too were prisoners from the columns who had stayed behind. They received me in a very friendly way, but they were not really reassured until I started to speak to them in Russian. They were Russians from the concentration camp and had already been there for several days. They had scavenged potatoes and were cooking a Russian *borscht* for themselves, using the potatoes and some grass. After the meal they left me.

I was in a desperate situation. I didn't dare to enter the nearby village because of my clothes. Then I saw a cart in the field; on it was a farmer wearing the sign "P" (for Pole). I went up to him and explained my situation to him in Polish. I asked him to help me, the main thing being to get me different clothes. He told me to meet him the same day in a large hay barn. He arrived at the agreed-upon time with a loaf of bread and a suit. I embraced him for joy. He told me we were surrounded in all directions by the English and the Americans, and that the Russians were nearby too. I spent the whole night in the hay barn and ate my loaf of bread even though I wasn't hungry at all. For the first time, I thought about my future. I was sure I would be liberated during the next few days. All night long I heard shooting all around me. This meant that the retreating German army was destroying various items of military equipment.

In the morning white flags were already hanging in the village. People were waiting for the victors to arrive. I realized that now I could enter the village. I waited for my liberators with impatience. They arrived very soon. When I saw the first one I embraced him and kissed him, full of overwhelming joy.

Was I now free?

Yes, now I was truly free!

But I couldn't believe that after years of imprisonment I was free again at last. Initially I wasn't happy about my fate at all, for what was I supposed to do now? My wife was dead, my son was dead, my next of kin and my friends had all been killed, my possessions had been destroyed and stolen! Alone, sick, weak and old, how was I supposed to build my future? What was I to do now with my freedom?

What I most wanted was to be destroyed together with the whole world and dissolve into dust and ashes.

But I gathered together my courage, following my inner voice, for I had been given back to life – and now I would go on with my life toward the unknown future.

Via Stutthof – Burggraben – Gotentov*
– Riben – Lauenburg to Freedom
 (Excerpt Based on Other Reports)

On 17 October 1944 a part of the Riga transport (about 100 people), headed by Mischa Glücksmann, was taken from Stutthof to Danzig. Equipped with new prisoners' uniforms, the prisoners were sent directly from the washroom onto the steamship. On 23 October 1944 the second transport (about 500 people) was put together and sent to Danzig under the command of the former head of the ghetto labor authority, Kassel.

Among these Jews were some from Latvia and Lithuania and a few from Germany. From Danzig the two transports moved on to Burggraben, where they lived in small log cabins. Later they were joined by more Jews to strengthen the commando, so that the total number, including the women, eventually reached 1,600. The last arrivals were former inmates of Auschwitz - Hungarian, Greek, and other Jews. The camp representative, Mischa Glücksmann, was the top commander. He slapped Kassel, who was a decent human being, and appointed him to be a block representative. Because Glücksmann had a sadistic nature, our situation grew much worse under his leadership. He chose the Pole Chamek, who was also especially cruel, to assist him.

The work site of the people in this satellite camp was about 15 kilometers from Danzig, and the Jews had to work in two twelve-hour shifts (day and night) in the Schichau shipyard. Because of the poor food and the heavy labor,

* [Ed.: Gotentov - Godętowa]

there were numerous cases of illness and death. The cause was mostly dysentery.

The physicians Dr. Sick from Liepāja and Dr. Lewi from Berlin worked in the camp infirmary. Dr. Sick is already known to the reader from the chapter on the Kaiserwald concentration camp, but I would like to say a few more words about his self-sacrificing work in Burggraben. Although he had himself been weakened by the continuous hardships and privations, as well as a heart condition, it is thanks to his knowledge and abilities that hundreds of comrades are still alive.

At the end of 1944 and 1945, when epidemics such as typhus, dysentery and so on broke out in Burggraben, he played down the sicknesses in his reports to the SS camp administrators and falsified the statistics. Had he not done so, the camp would have been put into quarantine, as happened to so many others. The camp's inmates would then have been cut off from the outside world and left to their certain death by starvation.

Dr. Damje from Dvinsk worked in the women's infirmary.

On 10 February 1945, as the front inexorably approached, the Jews were evacuated from the camp toward Lauenburg. Once again, many comrades lost their lives in this evacuation because of weakness and illness. Among the people I knew who died were: Abraham Laser, Jascha Sobolewitsch, Herzenberg, Bahn, Josif Misroch, Benze Liwschitz, the prominent young composer Liwschitz, Ika Basch, Jonny Westermann, the popular Vilno athlete Abramowitz, Abraham Grinberg from Vilno and a large number of others.

The rest were liberated by the Russians on 10 March 1945. The comrades Weiner (a singer), Jewnowitsch and Chila Kahn died one hour before the liberation.

During the liberation one of the prisoners (whose name is unknown) called out when he saw the Russians: "*Tovarishchi!*" (Comrades!) and fell over dead. A boy from Riga named Fleischmann was reportedly among the liberators (in the Red Army).

After the liberation there were still more victims, namely those who died in the Lauenburg hospital: Oskar Lutrin, Israel Itkin, Mehr and Gendl from Dvinsk.

Among those who were liberated were: Dr. Klebanow, Dr. Sick, the lawyer Lewinsohn, Schelkan, Aronsohn-Arnaw, Solomir, Perelmann, Mrs. Klara Schwab (from Liepāja), Moses Ratz and his son, the Chaim brothers, Max Finkelstein, Benjamin Edelstein, Salomon Gutkin, the Pulvermachers (father

and son), the Gutmann siblings, Brin and others. The survivors from Vilno included David Pergament, the jeweler Liwschitz and others.

From Riga via the KZ Stutthof – Buchenwald – Zeitz-Remersdorf to Theresienstadt and Freedom (Excerpt Based on Other Reports)

The large transport that left Riga on 6 August 1944 on the steamship Bremerhafen included thousands of Jewish men and women. Among them were Latvian, Lithuanian, German and Czech Jews. They were first taken to Danzig and from there to Stutthof in smaller ships. They did not stay there long, for they soon had to make room for new arrivals. Most of them were taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Among those who stayed in Stutthof were the dentist Berniker, the lawyer Itkin and his sons, and many young girls who worked for the local farmers.

Those who were sent to Buchenwald had to spend a three-week quarantine period in a tent camp. They lay directly in the dirt and there was no opportunity whatsoever to wash themselves. One noontime during these weeks, the Americans bombarded the nearby Gustloff works (which lay 100 meters from the camp). More than 1,500 prisoners were killed in this attack.*

The nearby SS barrack was also bombed, and in this attack more than 300 people were killed.**

After the bombardment old Professor Mintz, who had had to do heavy labor in the concentration camp, was moved to the clinic.

In the meantime the entire transport was divided into three sections. One section was sent to Zeitz-Remersdorf, a smaller section to Bochum, and the rest stayed in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Zeitz-Remersdorf, which was quite close by, was a large labor camp that was part of the Buchenwald concentration camp. The number of Jewish prisoners there was over 4,000. In the summer they lived in tents in Zeitz, and in the winter in unhygienic stone barracks in Remersdorf. The living conditions were wretched, and the rations extremely meager. The prisoners worked in the Brabag works (brown coal and synthetic petroleum). People died like flies, and

* [Ed.: Records at Buchenwald indicate that 400 men were killed, and over 1200 were wounded. If the wounds were severe, they were killed by injection later.]

** [Ed.: Ten guards were killed, 30 were wounded.]

the weak ones were sent to Buchenwald to be gassed.* Buchenwald then sent back new prisoners, who were Jews from Hungary. Among the Latvian Jews one saw the lawyer Wittenberg, Kaem, the Kölmann brothers, Dr. Goldring, Dr. Rogalin, Dr. Weinreich and others. The doctors survived, but all the others died. The doctors practically sacrificed themselves in order to ease their coreligionists' fate. Dr. Gitelsohn also died there.

As the Americans were approaching this area, the camp was liquidated. Every one was awakened in the night, forced into cattle cars and transported further to Theresienstadt. The sick people, who came in special freight cars, were to be transported to Buchenwald. Their later fate is unknown, but in any case they did not survive. They included Moses Scherman, J. Sener and others.

The train that traveled to Theresienstadt was literally a funeral procession. Of the 3,500 persons in it, only 750 arrived alive; all the others died on the way. Typhus was raging in Theresienstadt during this period, so the small number of survivors was reduced further.

Theresienstadt was a large ghetto containing mainly** Austrian, and Czech Jews. If I am not mistaken, at that time it was the only remaining ghetto, for the Germans had made an exception and not liquidated it in order to give the world the impression that ghettos still existed. It was a transit ghetto, and so its inhabitants changed frequently.

In 1941 Jews were sent from there to Riga and later on to Auschwitz and Maidanek to be exterminated. Theresienstadt even had its own money. A large percentage of the inmates succumbed to the typhus epidemic at that time, but the authorities had no interest whatsoever in taking any measures against it.

On 8 May 1945 the prisoners were liberated by the Russians. Among the liberated Latvian Jews was Alexander Westermann (who was prominent in the textile industry).

The Jews who had been sent to Bochum (about 500 people***) had to work in a munitions factory. Their living conditions were very bad. On 4 November 1944 this factory was bombed by the English. Among those who died in this bombardment were two Latvian Jews (one of them was the dental technician Jessil from Liepāja).

* [Ed.: As already noted, there was no gas chamber in Buchenwald.]

** [Ed.: German, Austrian, and Czech Jews]

*** [Ed.: 1600 Jewish men, of whom 1250 returned to Buchenwald in March, 1945. No more than 45 survived the subsequent death marches described below.]

The death rate in the Bochum barracks camp was very high. As the Americans were approaching, there were only a few left, and they were transported back to Buchenwald.

The Jews who had remained in Buchenwald had a very bad time of it. They were forced to do especially hard labor, including work in the stone quarries there. Many of the new arrivals from Riga died there, including Professor Mintz. The former ghetto police chief, the German Jew Frankenberg, was gassed.* The Jews, who had not forgotten his role in the weapons incident and other actions, made sure that he died.

The evacuation of Buchenwald began on 7 April 1944. The departure was scheduled for early morning, and the columns started to march together with the Jews who had returned from Bochum. While the people were going out through the gate, more than 100 prisoners were shot dead. These were the weak ones who were in no condition to be transported. The others had to march about 30 kilometers a day toward the Dachau concentration camp. This "death march" claimed numerous victims. According to our comrades' reports, those who died included: the Karaimskis (father and son), Salkind, Isaksohn, Isia Kaplan, Schapiro, the Amburg brothers, Berner, Wulf Ritow, the Minsker brothers, Max Kahn, Dr. Salitan, Sacharow, Saminski, Slawin, Zibin, Willy Weide, the engineers Schugall, Hindin, and Abram Kagan, Abram Baran, Kotzin, Axelrod, Mendelsohn, Michelsohn, Gabi Blechmann, Scholnik,** the Krüger brothers, Balkin, Plonski, Schemer, Dr. Jakobsohn, Benja Gurwitsch, Gordon, Sioma Gurwitsch, the dentists Medin and Heimann, Schitlowski, the musicians Bernin and Karam, Starobinetz and Israelsohn.

Among the Jews from Dvinsk who died were: Safro, Safir, Ojguston, Gafanowitsch, Karasik, the engineer Rosin, Dordik, Zodek, Joelsohn and Skutelski. The Jews from Libau who died were: Rolow, Westermann, Ephraim Simsohn and Gotthard.

Among the Jews from Ventspils, the dead included the Mendelsohn brothers and many others.

The march lasted fifteen days. After this march, only a very small handful of people survived until the liberation.

* [Ed.: There was no gas chambers in Buchenwald.]

** [Ed.: Perhaps, the author meant Schkolnik]

The Dachau Concentration Camp

(Excerpt Based on Other Reports)

The Jews who arrived at Dachau in the transport from Riga were those who had been evacuated earlier from the Dünawerke, Spilve and other Riga satellite camps. They had first been sent to work in Ponewesch in Lithuania. As the front approached, they were sent on from there, together with the Lithuanian Jews.

In view of the short time they spent as prisoners in Dachau, an extraordinarily large number of them died of murder and weakness. According to our comrades' reports, the Latvian Jews who died included: Israel Mehr, Jakob Mehr, Friedrich Schapiro, Elias Smitzkowitsch, Solomon Latz, Josef Lewin, Mendel Joffe, Simon Swirski, Kalman Michailowitsch, the Jewnowitsch brothers, Nathan Minsker, Joel Isakowitsch, Max Karp, Simon Leiter, Wulf and Chaim Kaplan, Ber Glück, Faiwusch Sack, Josef Sichelmann, Hirsch Lewenstein, Meilach and his son, Wulf Lewenstein, Ephraim Kagan, Abram Katz, Paul Schadel, Sch. Ringelmacher, Isaak Königsfest, Grünholz, Abram Matis, David Kremer, Jakob Judelsohn, L. Günsburg, Eliezer Lewin and others.

The Day of Commemoration (Jorzait) in the Riga Synagogue

(The Tenth Day of the Month of Kislev)

The streets leading into the Old Town swarm with people. The Jews are streaming toward the large synagogue in Peitavas Street. People are getting lost in the ruins of the Old Town and it's difficult to find the way.

Long before the scheduled time, the narrow Peitavas Street is full of Jews, who can be seen here again for the first time after a pause of five years.

The heads of the Latvian inhabitants can be seen everywhere in the windows of the neighboring houses. Their faces wore a shocked expression; they know and feel only too clearly that they are to blame for everything that is happening here now. They had believed that nobody would remain alive, and that nobody would be able to bear witness concerning the local people's actions.

The large Peitavas Street synagogue stands forlorn, waiting for the revival of Jewish Riga.

This synagogue has survived not because the enemy wanted to spare it; it has survived merely because the neighboring houses stand so close to it that a fire in the synagogue would have endangered them as well.

The outside of the synagogue has not suffered as much as its interior. The inside of the beautiful synagogue has lost all its magnificence, and everything in it has disappeared except for one small bench.

The *oroin koidesch* (holy shrine) and even the walls have been desecrated by the hands of the enemy.

I climb the few steps leading to the synagogue and stay there for a while. I am moved to go down to the *bet hamidrot* (Bet Hamidrasch - House of Prayer) in the cellar, where I prayed when I was a young man, and where the late Riga rabbi Sack taught the *Schiur*, or Talmud. There too, everything has been destroyed and nothing remains.

I remember Cantor Abramis, who for many years thrilled Jewish hearts here with his beautiful voice.

On this day the Jews are meeting here to weep over their sorrows and meditate on the best and most beautiful of what they have lost.

I meet comrades from camps and concentration camps, who tell me about their various experiences. They also report on many people who died in Germany after the liberation because of their weakness, or who are still in hospitals battling with death.

I also see Jews who have returned from the Soviet Union. But the Jews I used to meet in my daily life and business rounds are no longer there.

The largest proportion of Jews present are from our eastern provinces, who had the possibility of fleeing from the enemy. I ask about one or another person. None of them is there. This murderous war has claimed countless victims.

Numerous graves of Latvian Jews lie near Moscow (Lenino), and still more near Staraja Russa. These Jewish heroes protected Moscow from the enemy with their own bodies, and thus gave another glorious chapter to history.

Now they lie still in their graves and are known as the heroes of the Latvian Guard division. They have lost their Jewish names, which are not publicly mentioned, and thus the world does not know they were Jews.

The women's gallery above is full to bursting. The women are already weeping even before they cross the threshold of the synagogue. They also weep before the cantor has recited the *Hazkoro*, or prayer of commemoration.

People weep as they greet each other. They no longer ask about one or another person, for hardly anyone has survived anyway. Among the women are a great many young widows.

Many men and women are in uniform. One sees very high-ranking Jews, and those who have already been demobilized are still wearing their uniforms.

The congregation looks very poor, as if a war were over.

This is the Riga of today!

This is not only Riga but most of the Jewish Latvian community!

Whether great or small, all of them are here.

And the Jewish *kibbutz* (community) of Latvia, which once was so large and beautiful, can today easily fit into the only synagogue that has survived.

Izkor (commemoration)!

I am one of the few who know when *Kaddish* has to be said. Most of them don't know this.

The present rabbi (who was saved in Riga but is not a native of the city) climbs to the chancel next to the *oroin koidesch*.

The synagogue is as quiet as a tomb. The rabbi tries to speak but his voice is choked by tears.

The people in the gallery and below sob and weep and cannot calm down.

The rabbi begins his sermon. He thanks God the Almighty for the fact that Jews can now gather together in the city that was supposed to be "free of Jews". He thanks the liberators also.

He touches upon our great tragedy, but a new storm of pain that breaks out among all of those present prevents him for a time from going on with his sermon. He tells of the great martyrdom of the Jewish *kibbutz* of Latvia, and goes on to speak of the native Latvian population, which played a great role in our destruction.

We simply cannot believe that the people who had grown up with us and lived with us looked upon our great misfortune so pitilessly and even increased it.

The rabbi lifts up his hands to the Almighty. He prays to Him for retribution for all the spilled blood of our holy ones. When he has finished, the whole assembly weeps and shouts with a single voice: "Amen!"

A few more people speak about our great misfortune, but it cannot be described; only the few survivors can comprehend it.

We know only too well that our dearest and best, our wives, children and husbands, our fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers are now in Rumbula, Biķernieki and Baltezers.

We know just as well that the ashes of the people dearest to us have been scattered over all the fields of Latvia.

For us, all of Latvia is a huge cemetery – a cemetery without graves or grave-stones.

The cantor sings "*El molei rachamim*", the prayer of remembrance.

People weep and weep endlessly.

The *Hazkoro*, or funeral service, is over.

Money is collected for wire so that the places where our departed ones found their eternal rest can be fenced in.

No *macejwo* (memorial stone) exists for them, because our Jewish *kibbutz* in Latvia has grown poor and cannot afford such a "luxury".

Quietly and calmly, with tear-stained faces, people leave the synagogue. On its walls people have pasted notes bearing questions from all parts of the world: "We are looking for... we are looking for... we are looking for..."

Unfortunately there is only one answer to these questions: "None of them survived!"

As we leave the synagogue, we notice that everyone is in a hurry to leave the dark streets of the Old Town.

We walk through the city of Riga, which has already become alien to us. For those who were here during the German occupation, every foot of its soil is soaked with Jewish blood.

We cannot, and may not, live in this hostile environment any longer.

We have to move on!

We cannot and may not stay here!

Epilogue

At the conclusion of my book *Churbn Lettland*, I would like to ask the reader to consider the following: having tried to give a true and detailed account of every phase of the sufferings we Latvian Jews had to endure, I hope I have succeeded in giving as clear a picture of our tragedy as possible. Yet I must call attention to the fact that the events I have related began in early 1941, that is, quite a while ago, and that in the absence of any notes or diary entries I had to reconstruct them from memory under circumstances that were difficult in every respect.

I might mention furthermore that in writing my book I received hardly any assistance at all from my Latvian comrades. Therefore, if any errors have slipped in, or if I have expressed myself in improper diction, I beg the reader's indulgence since, as I already mentioned in the Foreword, I am not a professional writer.

But what I really am is a man who has shared, step by step, the martyrdom of his countrymen and coreligionists, and who has while writing this book experienced all those sufferings anew in his mind. So my whole downcast heart is contained in it!

My duty is fulfilled. I have done my part to secure immortality for the six million Jews, valuable and irreplaceable human beings, and in particular for our Latvian martyrs, whom we have lost to the utmost cruelty because of the murderous system of National Socialism.

Of the approximately 95,000 Jews living in Latvia at the time of the invasion by German troops, only a very small percentage was able to escape from Latvia. In most cases, this was possible only to those living in the eastern province (Latgale), where the Russian frontier was very near. This is also confirmed by the fact that the Jews now returning from the Soviet Union are chiefly people from Latgale. Jews from Riga and the province of Kurzeme can hardly be found any more.

Under the German government, about 40,000 Jews remained in Riga and about 33,000 in Latgale and Kurzeme. (With few exceptions, all the Jews of Kurzeme and Vidzeme had remained.) Of the total number of Jews living under German-Latvian rule (about 73,000), only between 950 and 1,000 persons, including 175 to 200 women and about fifty older children, were able to survive. All the others had been bestially killed, most of them in Latvia and the remaining ones later in Germany. Even after the liberation, many more died of weakness and diseases. Nearly all the graves are unmarked, and may be traced from Latvia down to the western border of Bavaria.

The Latvian *kibbutz*, or Jewish community, of today is composed mostly of returnees from the Soviet Union. But in my opinion, this number too is very small (about 14,000 in the whole of Latvia).

An influx of Jews to Riga and Latvia in general is coming chiefly from Russia (even from Leningrad and Ukraine). The 8,000 Jews who are still missing — that is, who have not returned from the Soviet Union — perished in the war or from the effects of war. (The Jews who emigrated to the Soviet Union before the war are not included in this number.)

The young men and women who went to the Soviet Union were enlisted for military service. The Latvian Division was composed of these people, who later were awarded the name "Latvian Guards Division" as a mark of distinction. They participated in the defense of Moscow, and according to reports there were more Jews than Latvians among them. There were also many Jews

among the officers. They fought and died like heroes. Because this division was generally regarded as a Latvian unit, the world, of course, knows little of the Jewish fighters. But we Latvian Jews cannot, and never will, forget them! Among the returnees there was also a large number of people who had fought in this division; most of them had been decorated, and many of them were invalids.

The approximately 1,000 Jews who "happened" to have survived the German occupation survived only thanks to the rapid evolution of events. If the war had lasted only one or two months longer, it may be taken for granted that not a few hundred but only a few individuals would still be alive, for the Germans and Latvians had always intended to annihilate all of them in order to remove possible witnesses. For this reason, corpses were even disinterred and cremated.

A partisan movement did not exist among the Latvian Jews, as it did in other ghettos. Moreover, the number of people who went into hiding was very small. Every undertaking, for instance the weapons incident in the ghetto, had a bad outcome and was unsuccessful. These facts are accounted for by the attitude of the indigenous population, which worked hand in hand with the Germans.

That is the history of the Latvian Jews!

Besides, Jews from all parts of the world were brought to Latvia – for instance Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Holland, France, Lithuania and Poland. Their exact number can no longer be determined. About 20,000 men, women and children were brought to the Reich Jewish ghetto and to Jumpravmuiža. All the others were transported directly from the railway station to the forest, where they were shot. They had been brought to Latvia because "Latvia was the appropriate venue for these murders", as General Jeckeln declared at his trial.

Moreover, the Latvians formed volunteer battalions which contributed to the annihilation of the Jews in the countries outside Latvia. They also participated, as has been ascertained, in the destruction of the ghettos in Warsaw, Minsk (White Russia), Minsk-Mazowiecki (Poland) and other cities. They took part in all the punitive expeditions in and outside Latvia (L. Krašaps, Prokurora piezīmes – Memoranda of a Public Prosecutor, Vapp, Riga 1946).

These events are also confirmed in detail by documents in the files of the great Nuremberg trial. In one of these documents it is said that the 15th Latvian Police Battalion took part in an action in White Russia called *Marsfever*.

Other documents of the same trial (Document No. 1113/P.S. of 6 November 1942 and 294/P.S.) report on various murders of Jews.



SS General Friedrich Jeckeln stands in the dock during his trial for atrocities committed in the Baltic States (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives # 79152)

The chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg Court, Mr. Benjamin Ferencz, declared officially that "according to the proofs on hand, the natives of the Baltic states eagerly participated in the mass murders and therefore could hardly have remained in their homeland afterwards".

With respect to the crimes of the Latvian bandits, I want to refer furthermore to the declarations of the SS man Alfred Metzner of Augsburg, Bavaria, who was arrested in September 1947. This murderer has, among other confessions, related how the Latvian volunteer teams, led by SS-*Untersturmführer* Amelung, took part in the annihilation of thousands of Jews in the vicinity of Slonim-Baranowitz.

The Jews taken to the place of execution were first brutally beaten and then shot. Half-dead, they were then thrown into the graves. The children were kicked into the graves.

Some participants of the annihilation teams excelled in specific, sadistic monstrosities. For instance, for their own enjoyment they shot pregnant

women in the abdomen and then flung them into the graves. Before the execution, the sexual organs and the rectum were examined.

This is how we were treated by the Latvian culture of the twentieth century!

We shall never forget the crimes the German people perpetrated against us, nor shall we ever forget how the Latvian people behaved toward us.

"Zchojr ascher oso lcho Amolek!" (Remember what the Amalekites have done to you!)

For us survivors, Latvia is the embodiment of a large graveyard, a graveyard without graves, a graveyard without monuments.

Index of Names**A.**

Abel, Xavier (Mr. X)
 Abraham
 Abrahamsohn
 Abram, Chatzkel
 Abram, Mrs.
 Abramis Jr.
 Abramis Sr.
 Abramowitz (Vilno)
 Abramsohn, Jakob
 Achad-Haam (Oscher Ginsburg)
 Adler, Lotte (Cologne)
 Aismann
 Akselrod
 Albert, Max, Prof.
 Albrecht (Riga)
 Albrecht, patrolman
 Alexander III, Czar
 Altmeyer, SA man
 Altschuler, Grischa
 Amburg brothers
 Ameisen (Prague)
 Amikuschanski
 Antikol, engineer
 Antokolski, sculptor
 Arājs, Viktors
 Ardow
 Arenstamm, Leo
 Arenstamm, Zila
 Ariewitsch, Juli
 Aron, (Zilupe)
 Aronsohn, N., sculptor
 Aronsohn-Arnaw, Lew,
 Arschon
 Aschmann
 Asja, Miss (Vilno)
 Atlas, Dusia
 Atlas, Samuel
 Aufrecht, Dr.
 Aufrecht, Ilse
 Auguston
 Axelrod

B.

Bag, Itzchok (Wischkin)
 Bahn
 Balkin
 Balsohn
 Bamberg, General
 Bangerskis, General
 Baran, Abram
 Barenblatt, Mrs.
 Barischnikow, Cantor
 Barkan
 Barmasel, Rebbe
 Baron, Dr.
 Baruchsohn, Mrs.
 Basch, Ika
 Baschkin
 Basma, Riwa
 Baufeldt, SS man
 Baum (Cologne)
 Bazalkin
 Becker, SS man
 Becker, truck driver
 Behrmann, Josef
 Behrmann, Tewja
 Belinki
 Beljak
 Bendel, First Sergeant
 Ben-Ghetto, child
 Benja (Cologne)
 Berel, H.K.P.
 Berg, Ruth
 Berger, Dora
 Berger, Ella
 Berger, Herta
 Berger, Inna
 Berger, Juli, lawyer
 Berger, Juna
 Berger, Sophie
 Bergmann, Director
 Berkowitsch, Dr.
 Berlin, Meier
 Berner (Jelgava)
 Berner Sr.
 Berner, Isaak
 Bernhard
 Berniker, Arian
 Berniker, David, dentist

Berniker, Nikolaj, Dr.
 Bernin, musician
 Bersin, Herz
 Bersin, Simka
 Bērziņš, Mazais
 Birkhahn, Leo
 Bischofswerder, Rolf, Dr. (Cologne)
 Bischofswerder, Ruth (Cologne)
 Bjalik, Chaim Nachman
 Blankenfeldt
 Blankenstein, A., lawyer
 Blankenstein, Siga
 Blatt, Dr.
 Blatterspiegel, SS man
 Blaumanis, writer
 Blecherowitz
 Blechmann, Gabi
 Bloch (Cologne)
 Bloch (Cologne)
 Blond, Rita
 Blowetz, Dr.
 Blumberg, Benjamin
 Blumenau brothers
 Blumenau, Salman
 Blumenfeld, Dr.
 Blumenfeld, Mrs. (Peka)
 Blumenthal, Georg
 Blumenthal, jurist
 Blumstein, Mrs.
 Bogus, room elder
 Bojarska, Eta
 Bolek, Dr.
 Bolek, Polish prisoner
 Borchowik
 Borkon, lawyer
 Borkum, E.
 Borowski
 Bottwin, Fritzi (Vienna)
 Botwinkin, mechanic
 Botwinkin, watchmaker
 Bowschower (Jelgava)
 Brahms, Jakob, editor
 Brandmann
 Brandt Billeting Department
 Brandt, (Percy)
 Braude, Rabbi (Kovno)
 Breger

Breinin, Ruwim
 Briedis, Latvian
 Brin
 Broders, Latvian, manufacturer
 Brodski (Kiev)
 Broido, Faigele
 Brojerska (Daugavpils)
 Brudner, Rachel
 Brünner, *Oberscharführer*
 Bruns, Hans, camp elder
 Buchbinder
 Buchholz, SS man
 Burian, L. (Prague)
 Burstein, Mrs.
 Burstein, Mulja
 Buwitsch

C.

Čakste, Jānis, President
 Čakste, Konstantīns, Prof.
 Chabad, Motke
 Chagi, Simon
 Chaikewitsch, Mrs.
 Chaim R., gravedigger
 Chait (Schawli)
 Chait, Robert
 Chamek (Poland)
 Chawensohn, (Liepāja)
 Chodakow (USA)
 Churchill, Prime Minister
 Chwojnik
 Cukurs, Herberts, pilot

D.

Dagarow-Epstein
 Daiber, Gestapo member
 Damje, Dr. (Daugavpils)
 Damski, Meilach
 Danilow-Milkowski
 Dankers, General
 Dannemann Sr.
 Dannemann, Dr.
 Dannenhirsch
 Danskop
 Dawidow
 Dawidsohn, Dr.
 Decker, SS man

Deiberg
 Delatitzka, Rachel
 Delatitzka, Sarah
 Dering, SS man
 Desentschik (Jelgava)
 Deutsch, David (Zilupe)
 Diesendorf, actor (Vienna)
 Dietrich, Gestapo member
 Diner, (Cēsis)
 Dinermann, Scheina
 Dolgitzer Jr.
 Dolgitzer, A.
 Dolgitzer, Zila
 Dombrowski (Ugāle)
 Donchio, Rabbi
 Dordik Jr. (Daugavpils)
 Dordik Sr. (Daugavpils)
 Drabkin, dental technician
 Dralle
 Drechsler, Area Commissar
 Dreier (Latgale)
 Dreier, pharmacist
 Dreier, Sima
 Dreyfuss (Paris)
 Drisin
 Drujan, Ljuba
 Drybe, SS man
 Dsemse (Poland)
 Dubin Jr.
 Dubin, Mordechai
 Dubin, Simon
 Dubnow, Simon, Prof.
 Dubowitzki
 Dubrow
 Duchownik
 Dumesch
 Durmaschkina, Fania
 Durmaschkina, Henia
 "Dwinsker Magid"
 Dworkin, Mrs.
 Dwortzow

E.

Edelman, Paul
 Edelstein (Liepāja)
 Edelstein, Benjamin
 Edelstein, Mrs.

Egber
 Eggers, Walter, non-commissioned officer
 Ehrlich, Bund Leader
 Eichle, Private First Class
 Einberg, engineer
 Einstein, Albert
 Eliasch
 Eljaschewitsch
 Eljaschow, Michail, lawyer
 Eljaschow, Mrs.
 Ellinsohn, Mali
 Ellis, Miss (Vienna)
 Elzofon, Israel
 Emma, SS girl
 Epstein, Israel
 Estermann, Rosa
 Etschin, Abe

F.

Fain, Oskar
 Fain, pharmacist
 Fainsohn, Max
 Fait
 Federmann, Lea
 Feiertag, Kostia, Dr.
 Feinstein (Father&Sons)
 Feinstein, (Zilupe)
 Feitelberg, Dr.
 Feitelsohn (Bauska)
 Feldhuhn, barber
 Feldhuhn, Jetta
 Feldhuhn, Rafael
 Feldhuhn, Uri
 Feldmann, dental technician
 Ferencz, B. (USA)
 Fiks, Miss
 Finkelstein, Chaim
 Finkelstein, lawyer
 Finkelstein, Max
 Firk
 Firkser, B.
 Fisch
 Fischelsohn brothers
 Fischelsohn, shoemaker
 Fischer, SS man
 Fischmann, deputy
 Fleischel, Günther

Fleischmann
 Fomin, Foma, musician
 Fonarjow, barber
 Fraenkel
 Frankenberg, Friedrich
 Frazer, Lindley (London)
 Freidberg, Boris
 Freidberg, Dr.
 Freidmann, Dr.
 Freimanis, Pērkonkrusts member
 Friedland (Daugavpils)
 Friedland, Cantor
 Friedman, Mrs.
 Friedmann
 Friedmann, Dr.
 Friedmann, engineer
 Friedmann, Leo
 Friedmann, Madi
 Friedrich, Jakob
 Frisch, Dr.
 Fritsche (Berlin)
 Frug, poet
 Fuchs, Rabbi
 Fuhrmann, Captain
 Funkelstein, Max

G.

Gafanowitsch (Daugavpils)
 Galant brothers
 Galanter brothers
 Galler
 Galpern, Ilia
 Galpern, Mosche
 Galpern, Mrs. (Daugavpils)
 Galpern, Pola
 Gamarnik, Mordechai
 Gandler, (Dvinsk)
 Garber, Zalel
 Garkawi
 Gawartin, Rabbi
 Gedalie (Kovno)
 Gendel, (Daugavpils)
 Genina, Dina
 Genkin Jr.
 Genkin, Grischa
 Gerber, Anja
 Gerber, Dr.

Gersohn
 Gerzig, Mrs.
 Ginsburg, Oscher
 Ginzburg, Baron
 Gitelsohn, Dr.
 Gitelsohn, Ljolja
 Gitelsohn, Minna
 Gläser
 Glaser, Chone
 Glaser, Moische
 Gluchowski, manufacturer
 Glück, Ber
 Glück, Felix (USA)
 Glück, Mrs. (Vilno)
 Glücksmann brothers
 Glücksmann, Mischa
 Godes, Herman, artist
 Goebbels Josef, Minister
 Goldarbeiter, engineer
 Goldberg (Rūjiena)
 Goldberg, Bruno
 Goldberg, Dr.
 Goldberg, Leiser
 Goldberg, Naum
 Goldring, Dr.
 Golodetz
 Golombeck
 Golowtschiner
 Gordon, M.
 Gorew-Kalmanowitsch
 Göring, Hermann, Reichsmarschall
 Gorowitz
 Goss, Egons
 Gotthard (Liepāja)
 Gottlieb brothers
 Gottlieb, Harry
 Gottlieb, Miss
 Gotz
 Gramm
 Grausutis
 Grein, (Daugavpils)
 Greschel
 Grey, lawyer
 Grikpetz Jr.
 Grikpetz Sr.
 Grinberg, Abraham (Vilno)
 Grinblatt, engineer

Grundmann, Josef
 Grünholz
 Gruschko
 Grusenberg, O., lawyer
 Gry, Anry
 Guljak
 Günsburg, Dr.
 Günsburg, L.
 Günsburg, Mrs.
 Gurarie (USA)
 Gurewitsch Saul
 Gurewitsch Tewje
 Gurewitsch, Dr.
 Gurewitsch, Dr.
 Gurewitsch, Sascha
 Gurewitsch, Sergej
 Gurwitsch (Daugavpils)
 Gurwitsch, Awsej
 Gurwitsch, Benja
 Gurwitsch, Fania
 Gurwitsch, Mischa
 Gurwitsch, Prof.
 Gurwitsch, S.
 Gurwitsch, Sioma
 Gurwitz (Kovno)
 Gut (Bauska)
 Gutkin, Nioma
 Gutkin, Salomon
 Gutmann brothers
 Gymnich, Max, Gestapo member

H.

Haar, Rudolf
 Hacker (Preiļi)
 Hahn, Benia
 Hamburger (Vienna)
 Hamburger, Mrs.
 Handke, Gestapo member
 Hannes Hans, German prisoner
 Harrik
 Heidemann, Alfons, lawyer
 Heifetz
 Heifetz, Jascha, musician
 Heimann, dentist
 Heimann, Dr. (Warsaw)
 Hellmann, Dr.
 Hermann

Herzberg
 Herzenberg (Jelgava)
 Herzenberg (Liepāja)
 Herzfeld, Dr.
 Hesfer, Lieutenant
 Heydrich, Reinhardt
 Hilda F. (Liepāja)
 Himmler, Heinrich
 Hindin, engineer
 Hirsch, SS man
 Hirschfeld, Fani
 Hirschmann (Jelgava)
 Hirschmann brothers
 Hirschowitsch, Dr. (Estonia)
 Hitler, Adolf, Reichskanzler
 Hochwarg, *Oberscharführer*
 Hoff brothers
 Hoff, L. (Jelgava)
 Hoffmann, SS man
 Hoffmann, Dr. J.
 Hofschowitsch, engineer
 Hollstein family
 Honig, Camil
 Horowitz, pianist
 Horowitz, Schmelke, Baron
 Huck, SS man
 Hurwitsch, Rebekka

I.

Idelsohn, Dr.
 Igdalski, Moisej
 Ignatz, room elder
 Isakowitsch, Joel
 Isaksohn, Dr.
 Isaksohn-Izig
 Israeli
 Israelit (Rēzekne)
 Israelit, Israel (Liepāja)
 Israelowitsch
 Israelsohn
 Israelsohn, Dr.
 Itkin, Israel
 Ithrow brothers
 Iwnowitsch, dental technician
 Izke

J.

Jabotinsky, Wolf
 Jadowker, Hermann
 Jaffet (Jelgava)
 Jäger, SA man
 Jakobi, engineer
 Jakobsohn, B., Dr.
 Jakobsohn, Judith
 Jakobsohn, lawyer
 Jakobsohn, Mali
 Jakobsohn, Mila
 Jakobsohn, Simon
 Jakobsohn, Sonia
 Jakobsohn, yachtsman
 Janowski
 Jawitsch, Drs. (brothers)
 Jaworkowsky, Dr.
 Jeckeln, Friedrich, General
 Jefimovna, Ida
 Jeletzki, pharmacist
 Jemin, Rabbi
 Jenner, Gestapo member
 Jerusalimska, Irka
 Jessil, dental technician
 Jewelsohn, lawyer
 Jewnowitsch brothers
 Jewoschker
 Jo, Michail
 Joelsohn, Jr.
 Joelsohn, Moses
 Joelsohn, Zodek (Daugavpils)
 Joffe, Cantor
 Joffe, Gustav
 Joffe, Jakob
 Joffe, Jr. Dr.
 Joffe, Mendel
 Joffe, tailor
 Jonny, musician
 Joselowitsch, shoemaker
 Joselsohn, dental technician
 Joseph, Dr.
 Jozin, Hirsch
 Judelowitsch (Lodz)
 Judelsohn, Jakob
 Junowitsch
 Jutter
 Juzek, Polish prisoner

K.

Kaem
 Kagan, Abraham, engineer
 Kagan, Ephraim
 Kagan, Natan
 Kagan, shoemaker
 Kaganski, lawyer
 Kahan, Meier Simcha
 Kahn, Chila
 Kahn, dentist
 Kahn, Dr.
 Kahn, M. S., (Meier Simche), Gaon
 Kahn, Max
 Kahn, Rabbi (Sabile)
 Kahn, Sch.
 Kaiser, née Barkan, (Alūksne)
 Kalabus
 Kaliko
 Kalniņš, Bruno
 Kamenkowitsch, Mrs.
 Kamenkowitsch, Sima
 Kapisius, N.C.O.
 Kaplan, Adolf
 Kaplan, Boris
 Kaplan, Chaim
 Kaplan, Isia
 Kaplan, J. (Kovno)
 Kaplan, Kostia
 Kaplan, Mrs. (Hannover)
 Kaplan, Rosa (Garabetov)
 Kaplan, Wulf
 Kapulski
 Karaimski Jr.
 Karaimski Sr.
 Karam, musician
 Karasik (Daugavpils)
 Karasik, patrolman
 Karp, Max
 Karstadt, L.
 Kartun, nurse
 Kassel, Egg Commando
 Kassel, labor dept.
 Kassel, Mrs.
 Katz, Abram
 Katz, M.
 Katzin, pharmacist
 Kaufer, ghetto elder

Kaufert
 Kaufmann (Berlin)
 Kaufmann (Preiļi)
 Kaufmann, Arthur
 Kaufmann, Berta
 Kaufmann, Ebi
 Kaufmann, Edith
 Kaufmann, Franziska
 Kaufmann, Gesia
 Kaufmann, Gestapo member
 Kaufmann, Max
 Kaufmann, Sascha (Auce)
 Kaufmann, Schachne
 Kauliņa, Latvian
 Kerscher, *Kommandant*
 Kersten, Felix, Dr.
 Kilow, Rabbi
 Kimcho, Mrs.
 Kirschbaum Sr.
 Kirschbaum, Mrs., dentist
 Kirschbaum-Rudow, Sinaida
 Klatzkin, K. Rabbi
 Klaus, Olga (Ginsburg)
 Klebanow, Dr.
 Klebanow, S.
 Klein (Auce)
 Kleinstadt
 Kleinstein
 Klempmann
 Klingmann (Daugavpils)
 Kobello, patrolman
 Koblenz, Schloma
 Kobrinski, Wolf
 Kodesch, agronomist
 Kodesch, engineer
 Köhler, SS man
 Kohn (Munich)
 Kohn, Isaak
 Kohn, T.
 Kohn, Willy
 Kölmann
 Kölmann David
 Königsfest, Isaak
 Kook, Rabbi
 Kopelowitsch (Palestine)
 Kopilow (Palestine)
 Kopilowski brothers
 Kopp (Preiļi)
 Koppel brothers
 Kor brothers
 Korotkin
 Kotzer, musician
 Kotzin
 Kotzin, H.
 Kowa, Emma, SS girl
 Kowalewsky, editor
 Kozba, (Daugavpils)
 Kraft, Gestapo member
 Kramer, Bubi
 Kramer, Rosa
 Krašaps, L.
 Kraskin brothers
 Krause Kurt, *Kommandant*
 Krebsbach, Dr.
 Krečmanis, Captain
 Kreitzer, Julius
 Kreitzer, Lilly
 Kremer, David
 Kretzer, Dr. (Daugavpils)
 Kretzer, Dr. Victor
 Kretzmer, Dr.
 Krieger, Mrs.
 Kristal, singer
 Kriwitzki
 Kroeschel, SS man
 Kronsohn, Dr. (Kovno)
 Krüger brothers
 Krüger, Mrs.
 Kügler, Gestapo member
 Kukla
 Kuptzik
 Kurin, Njoma
 Kussmann, Harry
 Kussmann, Josef
 Ūze family
 Kviesis, Alberts, President

L.
 Lakus, Elia
 Landau, Dr.
 Landau, Mrs.
 Landmann, Jasha, Jr.
 Landmann, Sr.
 Lange Rudolf, Dr., Gestapo member

Lange, Beate
 Lange, Moritz
 Laris, SS man
 Laser (Zilupe)
 Laser, Abraham
 Lasersohn, Prof.
 Lasersohn, Prof.
 Lat, Ilia
 Latz, Salomon
 Latzki-Bertoldi
 Laufer, Jankel
 Leander, Zarah (Sweden)
 Lechowitzki (Preiļi)
 Legow
 Leibowitsch, Betti
 Leibsohn
 Leikin brothers
 Leimanis, Latvian
 Lein, engineer
 Leiser, Max, (Cologne)
 Leiter, Simon
 Lekachowitsch, Rachel
 Lekachowitsch, Rita
 Lemberger, Prof.
 Lemkin brothers
 Leri (Klopotowski)
 Lew, Fedja
 Lewande
 Lewensohn
 Lewenson, Gearmot
 Lewenstein, Eva
 Lewenstein, Hirsch
 Lewenstein, P.
 Lewenstein, Wulf
 Lewi (Germany)
 Lewi brothers
 Lewi, Abram (Abrasha)
 Lewi, Dr.
 Lewi, engineer
 Lewi, Jewish policeman
 Lewi, Paul
 Lewi, sign painter
 Lewin brothers
 Lewin, Eliezer
 Lewin, Josef
 Lewin, Mania
 Lewin, Nioma
 Lewinsohn, lawyer
 Lewit
 Lewitas, Ber.
 Lewitas, Dr.
 Lewius
 Lewstein brothers
 Lewstein brothers, bankers
 Lichtenstein, Rabbi
 Liebermann
 Liebesmann, lawyer
 Liepiņš, Manfreds
 Liesel, Miss (Cologne)
 Lin, Slate
 Lipkin, pharmacist
 Lipmanowitsch
 Lipow, Ester
 Lippert
 Litzie, Miss (Berlin)
 Liwschitz (Vilno)
 Liwschitz, Benzel
 Liwschitz, Boris
 Liwschitz, composer
 Ljuba, Mrs. (Vilno)
 Lockenfitz, Sergeant Major
 Löffler, Sergeant
 Lohse, Hinrich, Reichskommissar
 Löw
 Löwenstein, Baron
 Löwenstein, Meilach
 Löwenstein, Mrs.
 Löwenstein, Wulf
 Löwenthal (Sabile)
 Löwstein, Mrs.
 Lubotzka, Reisele
 Lubotzki, Benia
 Lubotzki, Chaim, Rabbi
 Ludwig, electrician
 Lulow, Georg
 Lulow, Raja
 Luntz, pharmacist
 Lurie
 Lutrin, Oskar
 Luxemburg, Mrs.
M.
 Machelsohn, Leib
 Machmonik

Machtus, Eddi
 Machtus, Herbert
 Magalif, Dr.
 Magalif, Mrs.
 Magaram (Daugavpils)
 Magarik
 Magilnikow, engineer
 Magon-Polski (Vilno)
 Maikapar
 Maisel
 Maisel, Dr., Deputy
 Maisel, Hanna
 Maisel, Minna
 Maisel, Rasik
 Maitlis
 Mandelstamm, Josef
 Manuchowitsch (Liepāja)
 Mapu (Kovno)
 Margolin, Billeting Department
 Margolin, Mrs. (Kovno)
 Margolin, Sachar (Kovno)
 Marija, SS girl
 Marjanowski Jr.
 Marjanowski Sr.
 Markēviča, Latvian
 Matis, Abram
 Matros
 Maurer brothers
 Mauser, SS man
 May, Dr.
 Mayer, policeman
 Mazo, Rabbi
 Medem, Freiherr von, Gauleiter
 Medin, dentist
 Mehr (Daugavpils)
 Mehr, Israel
 Mehr, Jakob
 Meierovics, Zigfrīds, Minister
 Meierow, Mrs.
 Meierowitsch, Meier
 Meierowitz, Dr.
 Meiksin (Daugavpils)
 Meilach, Jr.
 Meilach, Sr.
 Meister, B.
 Melech-Moische (Daugavpils)
 Meller brothers
 Meller, Leo
 Mendelsohn brothers (Ventspils)
 Menzowski
 Metz, Prof.
 Metzger
 Metzner, SS man
 Michailowitsch, Kalman
 Michalischek
 Michelsohn
 Michelsohn, Anna
 Michelsohn, engineer
 Michelsohn, Max
 Michlin, Dr.
 Michoels-Wowski (Moscow)
 Migge, Kurt, Gestapo member
 Miletzki
 Milkow (Daugavpils)
 Miller (Kovno)
 Milmann, Ch.
 Milmann, industrialist
 Milrud, Michael editor
 Minin
 Minkow
 Minsk brothers
 Minsker, Grischa
 Minsker, Leiba
 Minsker, Mrs.
 Minsker, Nathan
 Mintz, Wladimir, Prof.
 Mintz, Cantor
 Mintz, Dr.
 Mischkinski, B., engineer
 Misroch, Isaak
 Misroch, Itzchok
 Misroch, Josif
 Misroch, Kalman
 Misroch, Lilia
 Misroch, Owsej
 Misroch, Sascha
 Mister X, prisoner (Xavier, Abel)
 Misulowin, M.
 Mogilnikow, engineer
 Mogilnitzki
 Monastirsky
 Mordchelewitsch brothers
 Morein
 Mowschensohn, Jakob, engineer

Mowschensohn, Mischa
 Mowschensohn, Mrs.
 Mowschowitz-Herz, Gershon
 Müller, N.C.O.

N.

Nachke, boxer
 Nachtigall, SA man
 Naftali, Mrs.
 Nathan, Anatoli
 Nathan, child
 Nathan, Mrs.
 Nesterow
 Neu (Liepāja)
 Neu, Mote
 Neuburger, Ljowa
 Neumann, Oberwachtmeister
 Niburg
 Nickel, Richard, Gestapo member
 Niemirowski
 Niss, Harry
 Nitschun
 Nogaller, Willy
 Noim, Dr., Jr.
 Noim, Dr., Sr.
 Noimin
 Nowik, Mulja
 Nowosjolok
 Nurock Aron, Rabbi
 Nurock Mordechai, Rabbi

O.

Auguston (Daugavpils)
 Okun, Owsei
 Oppenheimer
 Orelowitsch, Sch.
 Oretschkin, Boris
 Oretschkina, Mrs.
 Osiasohn
 Ospowat
 Ostband, Montik
 Ostband, Samuel
 Ostrowski, Per
 Ostrowski, Salomon, musician
 Owtschinski, Rabbi
 Ozoliņš, Latvian
 Ozols, Latvian

P.

Padowitsch
 Paik
 Paikele (Vilno)
 Paperna, Fira
 Paperna, Olga
 Paperna, Rosa
 Parnas (Lemberg)
 Pasternak
 Patzkin, Ber
 Paul, Rabbi
 Paulus, von, Field Marshall
 Perelmann (Sabile)
 Peres, Mrs. A, née Blumstein
 Peretz
 Peretz, Isaak Leib
 Peretzmann
 Perewoski
 Pergament, David
 Perl (Germany)
 Peter the Great, Czar
 Pētersone, Mrs.
 Pētersons, Latvian
 Pewsner, Dr.
 Pikielni, Mrs. (Lodz)
 Pill
 Pilsudski, Josef
 Pinnes, Roma
 Pinnes, Zila
 Pisetzki
 Pitel
 Pitum
 Plawin Salman
 Plazinski Leib, Rabbi
 Plonski
 Plotkin, Dr.
 Pole, Mrs., Latvian
 Poljak, Boris, Dr.
 Poljak, pharmacist
 Polonski, Hirsch
 Polonski, Rabbi
 Pommeranz brothers
 Pommeranz, policeman
 Poss, director
 Potasch (Preiļi)
 Prater, SS man
 Preiss

Presma (Daugavpils)
 Press, Bernhard, Dr.
 Prismann, Dr.
 Prismann, Mrs.
 Pristin, Isia
 Propes, Aron (USA)
 Pruchno, Lisa
 Pruchno, Sarah
 Przedborski, Stanislaw
 Pudelis, Artist
 Pukin family
 Pukin, Jr.
 Pukin, Osia
 Pulvermacher
 Purmek, Mrs.
 Purmel, pharmacist
 Pushkin, author

R.

Rabetz (Africa)
 Rabinowitsch brothers
 Rabinowitsch, Kniaz
 Rabinowitsch, cantor
 Rabinowitsch, Julius (writer)
 Rabinowitsch, Salman
 Rafalowitsch, B.
 Raft (Warsaw)
 Rago, engineer
 Raichel, Esia
 Raikin (Liepāja)
 Raikin, B.
 Raizin, Asia
 Raizin, G.
 Raja, Ms.
 Ranzel, Dr. (Prague)
 Rappaport, Nochum
 Rappoport, engineer
 Raschina, Rachel, artist
 Rassein, Jakob
 Rastrelli, architect
 Rasum
 Ratz, Jakob
 Ratz, Moses
 Remigolski
 Resnik
 Rietums
 Ringelmacher, Sch.

Rips
 Ritow brothers
 Ritow, Wulf
 Robzer
 Rogalin, Dr.
 Rogalin, Mrs.
 Rogalin, Olga
 Rolow (Daugavpils)
 Rommel, Manfred, Feldmarschall
 Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, President
 Roschmann, Eduard, Commandant
 Rosenberg, Alfred, Minister
 Rosengarten (London)
 Rosenmayer, Reinhold, camp elder
 Rosenstein
 Rosenthal (Poland)
 Rosenthal, manufacturer
 Rosenthal, Michael
 Rosenzweig (Palestine)
 Rosin (Daugavpils)
 Rosin, engineer
 Rosin, Hermann
 Rosin, Josif, Gaon
 Roskin
 Rosowski, Cantor
 Rotbard
 Rotberg
 Rubinstein, Anton, composer
 Rubinstein, Mrs.
 Rubinstein, Sascha
 Rudi, painter
 Rudow, B. Dr.
 Rudow, Boris
 Rudow, Mrs.
 Rudow-Kirschbaum, dentist

S.

Sacharow
 Sacharow, director
 Sacharow, Folia
 Sachodnik
 Sachs, Jakob
 Sack, Faiwusch
 Sack, Mendel, Rabbi
 Sack, Rabbi
 Safir
 Safir brothers

Safro (Daugavpils)
 Safro, S.
 Sagalow, blacksmith
 Sagawalow, Hirsch (Kovno)
 Salaman
 Salaman (Nuremberg)
 Salitan, Dr.
 Salkind
 Sallgaller
 Salmanowitsch, Max
 Salmansohn, Benia
 Salomon, Oskar
 Salzberg (Kovno)
 Salzmann
 Saminski
 Saminski, Leib
 Samunow
 Sandler, Dr.
 Sane (Kovno)
 Sapugo
 Saslawski, engineer
 Sass, Private 1st class
 Sauer, Albert, SS *Kommandant* of Kaiserwald
 Saul (Kovno)
 Sawjalow, state prosecutor
 Schabad, Zemach, Dr. (Vilno)
 Schabel, Ch.
 Schabelstock, Ch.
 Schachtner (Preili)
 Schadel, Paul
 Schaffer (Preiļi)
 Schäffer, Mrs.
 Schäftel (Vilno)
 Schäftlin, Rafael
 Schalit (London)
 Schalit, I.
 Schalit, musician
 Schaljapin Fjodor, singer
 Schapiro
 Schapiro, Abram
 Schapiro, Dr.
 Schapiro, Friedrich
 Scharf
 Schas, Otto
 Schatz, Berta
 Schatz, Schmaja
 Schatz-Anin, Prof.
 Schatzow
 Scheftel
 Scheftelowitsch
 Scheinberger
 Scheinesohn, dentist
 Schelkan, Gregor
 Schellenberg, Walter
 Schemer
 Schenker
 Scheps
 Scher, Elia (Palestine)
 Scher, J.
 Schereschewski
 Schermann, Moses
 Schermann, Paul
 Schermann, Tamara
 Schermann, taylor
 Scherwitz, Fritz
 Schetzen
 Schibbe, chief Inspector
 Schibbel, SS man
 Schidlowski
 Schiff (Cologne)
 Schiff, Faiusch
 Schiffmacher, Private First Class
 Schiller, SS man
 Schimmel, SS man
 Schiphausen, Sergeant Major
 Schitlowski, musician
 Schlitter (Vienna)
 Schkolnik
 Schlomowitsch, Jr.
 Schlomowitsch, Robert
 Schlossberg, dairy worker
 Schlossberg, engineer
 Schlossberg, L., Cantor
 Schlütter (Kaiserwald)
 Schmähmann (Liepāja)
 Schmehmann
 Schmidt, Private First Class
 Schmuljan, banker
 Schmuljan, Boris
 Schmuljan, Jr.
 Schmuljan, Pola
 Schmuljan, Rosa
 Schneersohn, Rabbi
 Schneider (Germany)

Schneider, (Makkabi)
 Schneider, architect
 Schneider, B.
 Schneider, Mascha
 Schneidermann
 Schneier, Kostia
 Schneier, Mrs.
 Schnitke (Liepāja)
 Schönberger
 Schover, Latvian
 Schub, Rafael
 Schugal, engineer
 Schuhmacher, Private First Class
 Schulenburg, von der
 Schulkin
 Schulkin, Sonia
 Schuller, SS man
 Schulmann, Rosa
 Schultz, Colonel
 Schultz, Herbert
 Schwab, Arkady, Dr. (Liepāja)
 Schwab, Bernhard
 Schwab, George
 Schwab, Klara, Mrs.
 Schwab, Mia
 Schwabe, column leader
 Schwartz, Mrs. (Vienna)
 Schwarz, Frida
 Schwarz, SS man
 Schwellenbach, Private First Class
 Seck, Rudolf, Gestapo member
 Segal, Betty
 Segal, engineer
 Seidemann, engineer
 Sēja, Ambassador
 Seliger, SA man
 Seligsohn, B.
 Seligsohn, Jr.
 Seligsohn, Mrs.
 Seligsohn, Sr.
 Selionker
 Sener, J.
 Senitzki, Nochum, engineer
 Serensen, Cantor
 Sichelmann, Josef
 Sick, Dr.
 Sienitzki, gardener
 Siew, Abe (Palestine)
 Silbermann, Minna
 Silbermann, Schloime
 Siliņš, Pēreris, Latvian
 Silitzki
 Sima, messenger
 Simsohn, Ephraim
 Singel, lawyer
 Singel, Rosa
 Sirotinski
 Sislin (Krāslava)
 Siwianski, Dr. (Kovno)
 Siwzon, David (Liepāja)
 Sjamka, driver
 Sklar, conductor
 Skutel
 Skutelski (Preiļi)
 Skutelski (Daugavpils)
 Skutelski, Dr.
 Skutelski, Schaja
 Slawin, Boris
 Slotnikow, carpenter
 Slowin
 Slowin, J.
 Slutzkin, Abrasha
 Smitzkowitsch, Elias
 Sobolewitsch brothers
 Sobolewitsch, Jascha
 Solomir, Dr.
 Soloweitschik, E.
 Soloweitschik, Moisej
 Sorge, Gustav, SS man (Iron Gustav)
 Sperling-Tschuzhoj, musician
 Spitz, Rabbi
 Springenfeldt Rita, nee Kaplan
 Springenfeldt, Isia
 Sproģis, Dr.
 Srago, Mulja
 Srago, Raja
 Stalin, Josef
 Stameskin (Riga)
 Stanke, SA man
 Starobin, Grischa
 Starobin, Jr.
 Starobin, Salman
 Starobinetz
 Stauffenberg, von

Stein, Riwa
 Steinberg
 Steinbock, S.
 Steingold, Chaim
 Steingold, Georg
 Steklow, Mrs.
 Stern, Mrs.
 Steuer, O. (Prague)
 Štiglics, Prefect
 Stoller
 Storch, Anna
 Storch, Hillel (Stockholm)
 Straschun (Vilno)
 Straschun, dental technician
 Streicher, Julius
 Stupel
 Summer, SS man
 Swetlanow brothers
 Swirski, Simon

T.

Tabak, A.
 Tabatschnik
 Taitz, Hanna, singer
 Tankel
 Tankelowitsch (Livonia)
 Temko, musician
 Terminka, child
 Tewelow, Ljuba
 Thal, Dr.
 Thal, Louis
 Tīdemanis, Pērkonkrusts member
 Traub
 Treinin
 Treister, Konrad
 Triebe, SS man
 Trohn, lawyer
 Trubek, Dina
 Trubek, Nison
 Tschertas, Dr., dentist
 Tschernuschko, Mascha
 Tuchel, patrolman
 Tukazier, Abram
 Tumarkin, Dr., dentist
 Tuw, Bubi

U.

Ulmanis, Dr., President
 Ulmann, butcher
 Ulmann, Mrs.
 Ulmann, policeman
 Ungar, Rabbi
 Urewitsch
 Usdin brothers
 Usischkin

V.

Valdmanis, Minister
 Veilands, Latvian
 Vilsinger, German prisoner
 Vitola, Latvian
 Vogel

W.

Wachtel, M.
 Waldenberg
 Wand (Germany)
 Wange, Paul
 Wasbutzki
 Wassermann
 Weide, Willy
 Weinberg
 Weiner, singer
 Weinreich, Dr.
 Weinstock (Malta)
 Weintraub, lecturer
 Weise, singer
 Weiß, Captain
 Weissbein, Director
 Weissenstein, Otto, actor
 Weitz
 Wessel, Horst (Germany)
 Westermann (Liepāja)
 Westermann (Stockholm)
 Westermann, Alexander
 Westermann, Jonny
 Westermann, Meier
 Widser, jeweler
 Wigdortschik, Dr.
 Wigodski, Dr. (Vilno)
 Wilner, Jewish quartermaster
 Winokur
 Wischnewska, Mrs.

Wiskind
 Wisner, Heinz, SS medic
 Wittenberg, Menachem
 Wittenberg, Robert
 Wittenberg, Simon, lawyer
 Witzleben
 Wolf & Dering families
 Wolf (Danzig)
 Wolf, Sr., jeweler
 Wolfowitz
 Wolfsohn
 Woloschinski, Leo
 Woloschinski, Sascha
 Wolow, pharmacist
 Wolpe, Dr.
 Wolpert, Dr.
 Wolschonok
 Woltschok (Daugavpils)
 Wowski-Michoels (Moscow)
 Wulf
 Wulf, jeweler
 Wulfahrt, Sabile
 Wulfowitz, engineer

Zitkus, Dr., Gestapo member
 Zodek (Daugavpils)
 Zorechke, Vilno
 Zorn, Major

and many others.

Z.

Zalelsohn
 Zapp, Kovno
 Zapp, Mrs.
 Zariņš
 Zeitlin
 Zeitlin, pharmacist
 Zemel, Jechiel
 Zemel, Moische
 Zemel, tailor
 Zenciper
 Zewin, Frida (Vilno)
 Zfas sisters
 Zibin
 Zijuni (laundry worker)
 Zijuni, barber
 Zijuni, teacher
 Zimmermann, Jascha
 Zinn, Etele (Liepāja)
 Zinn, Moritz (Liepāja)
 Zinnmann, J. (Vilno)
 Zinnmann, Jakob
 Ziper

Edition Schoáh & Judaica/Jewish Studies – seit über 25 Jahren
von/by Prof. Erhard Roy Wiehn 
Hartung-Gorre Verlag/Publishers, Konstanz, Germany
Ca. 230 Titel: 7/2010 <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/soziologie/judaica>

Letland / Latvia

Max Kaufmann, Churbn Lettland - Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands. (München 1947, Reprint zum Gedenken an Max Kaufmann) Mit einem Brief von Steven Springfield, Preface Howard L. Adelson. Konstanz 1999, 579 Seiten, 34,77 €. ISBN 3-89649-396-5

Max Kaufmann, Churbn Lettland – The Destruction of the Jews of Latvia. Konstanz 2010, 294 pages, photos. ISBN 978-3-86628-315-2 u. 3-86628-315-6: Neu – New!

Arkadius Scheinker, Schoáh in Riga – Nach schöner Kindheit in Riga durch das Ghetto Riga im Arbeitskommando BdO, dann im TWL Riga-Mühlgraben und durch die KZs Stutthof bei Danzig und Danzig-Burggraben im KZ Gottenhof / Pommern befreit. Konstanz 2009, 118 Seiten, Fotos, 14,80 €. ISBN 3-86628-264-8 u. 978-3-86628-264-3

Basja Zin, Wie ein grauenhafter Traum - Jüdische Schicksale in Lettland 1941–1945. Konstanz 1998, 48 Seiten, 10,12 €. ISBN 3-89649-363-9

Litauen / Lithuania

Benjamin Anolik, Lauf zum Tor mein Sohn – Von Wilna durch das Ghetto Wilna und sechs Lager in Estland. Jüdische Schicksale in und aus Litauen. Konstanz 2005, 127 Seiten, Fotos, 14,80 €. ISBN 3-86628-020-3

Solomon Atamuk, Juden in Litauen - Ein geschichtlicher Überblick vom 14. bis 20. Jahrhundert. Aus dem Litauischen von Zwi Grigori Smoliakov. Konstanz 2000, 340 Seiten, 29,65 €. ISBN 3-89649-200-4

Jehuda Beiles, Dem Massengrab entkommen – Ein Augenzeuge berichtet über die Schoáh in Kaunas und Kaufering. Konstanz 2010, 128 Seiten, Fotos u. Dokumente, 16,80 €. ISBN 3-86628-297-4 u. 978-3-86628-297-1: Neu!

Leo Lewinson, Der unvergängliche Schmerz - Zum Leben und Leiden der litauischen Juden. Ein persönlicher Bericht 1920–1945. Konstanz 2001, 82 Seiten, 16 €. ISBN 3-89649-673-5

Grigorijus Smoliakovas, Die Nacht die Jahre dauerte - Ein jüdisches Überlebensschicksal in Litauen 1941-1945. Mit einer Dokumentation. Konstanz 1992, 223 Seiten, 20,35 €. ISBN 3-89191-557-8: Vergriffen! – Out of Stock!

English or German/English books in Prof. Wiehn's edition on Shoah & Judaica / Jewish Studies

Gretel Baum-Meróm & Rudy Baum, Kinder aus gutem Hause – Von Frankfurt am Main nach Israel und Amerika. / Children of a Respectable Family – From Frankfurt to Israel and America 1913/15-1995. Konstanz 1996, 263 pages, 20,35 €. ISBN 3-89191-813-5: Out of stock!

Gretel Baum-Meróm, Ich erinnere – Jüdisches Leben in Frankfurt am Main und in Israel. Eine Nachlese / I remember – Jewish life in Frankfurt/Main and in Israel. Second thoughts 1913–1934-2008 Konstanz 2009, 126 pages. 14.80 €. ISBN 3-86628-229-X

Tutti Jungmann-Bradt, Die Bradts – Jüdische Familiengeschichte aus Berlin 1870–1999 / The Bradts – History of a Jewish Family from Berlin 1870–1999 (Englisch von James Stuart Brice). Konstanz 1999, 130 Seiten, 12,68 €. ISBN 3-89649-392-2

Dawid Budnik/Jakow Kaper, Nichts ist vergessen – Jüdische Schicksale in Kiew / Nothing is Forgotten – Jewish Fate in Kiev 1941–1943. (German, English, Russian) Kiew/Konstanz 1993, 317 pages, 6.14 €. ISBN 3-89191-666-3

Jerzy Czarnecki, My Life as an "Aryan" – From Velyki Mosty through Zhovkva to Stralsund. Konstanz 2007, 173 pages, many photos, 14.80 €. ISBN 3-89649-998-X

Henry L. Eaton: Killed – The Massacre of Yassy 1941, in: Mirjam Korber, Deportiert - Jüdische Überlebensschicksale aus Rumänien 1941–1944. Aus dem Rumänischen und eingeleitet von Andrei Hoişie. Konstanz 1993, 303 Seiten, 24.54 €. ISBN 3-89191-617-5

Joachim Kalter, Eine jüdische Odyssee – Von Leipzig nach Polen abgeschoben und deutsche Lager überlebt. Ein Bericht / A Jewish Odyssey Deportation from Leipzig to Poland and Survival in German Camps. A Report 1938–1946. Vorwort von / Preface by Edgar Hilsenrath. Konstanz 1997, 142 Seiten, 16.36 €. ISBN 3-89649-161-X

Bernhard Mayer, Interessante Zeitgenossen – Lebenserinnerungen eines jüdischen Kaufmanns und Weltbürgers 1866-1946 / Interesting Contemporaries – Memoirs of a Jewish Merchant and Cosmopolitan 1866-1946. Konstanz 1998, 378 pages, 24.54 €. ISBN 3-89191-888-7

Dmitry B. Peisakhov u. Erhard Roy Wiehn (Ed./Hg.), Jewish Life in Kiev – Photo documentation. (Introduction German, English, Russian) 1992/93. 200 pages, 18.41 €. ISBN 3-89191-551-9

Eitan Porat, Voice of the dead children – From the Carpathian Mountains via Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen to Israel 1928–1996 (English by James Stuart Brice u. Hebrew). Konstanz 1997, 92/63 (155) pages, 14,32 €. ISBN 3-89649-123-7: **Out of stock!**

Zwi Helmut Steinitz, As a boy through the hell of the Holocaust – From Poznań through the Kraków Ghetto, Płaszów, Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Berlin, Haselhorst, Sachsenhausen, to Schwerin and over Lübeck, Neustadt, Bergen-Belsen and Antwerp to Eretz Israel 1927–1946. Konstanz 2009. 396 pages, 24.80 €. ISBN 3-86628-250-8; 978-3-86628-250-6

Jacques Stroumsa, Violinist in Auschwitz – From Salonica to Jerusalem 1913-1967. Translated by James Stuart Brice. Konstanz 1996, 110 pages, 10.12 €. ISBN 3-89191-869-0

Erhard Roy Wiehn, Ewraï sti Thessaloniki – Jews in Thessaloniki. (ins Griechische übertragen von Rudolf Amariglio, translated into English by James Stuart Brice). Konstanz 2004, 74 pages (Grec and. English), 12 €. ISBN 3-89649-909-2



<http://www.uni-konstanz.de/soziologie/judaica>, <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/judaica/kuenstlerinnen>

Zu beziehen bei/can be ordered from

Verlagsbuchhandlung Hartung-Gorre

Säntisblick 26, D-78465 Konstanz, Germany - Telefon +49 (0)7533/97227 - Fax 97228

E-mail: Hartung.Gorre@t-online.de & verlag@hartung-gorre.de

oder durch den Buchhandel/or at your book shop!

<http://www.hartung-gorre.de>